WILTSHIRE TALES.

WILTSHIRE TALES.

BY

JOHN YONGE AKERMAN.

"L'accent du pays où l'on est né, demeure dans l'esprit et dans le cœur comme dans le langage."—ROCHEFOUCAULT.

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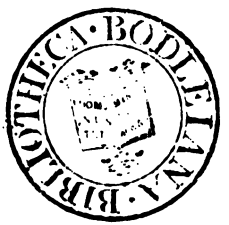

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PREFACE.

THE Tales in this volume appeared some years ago, with the signature of "Paul Pindar," in 'Bentley's Miscellany,' the proprietor of which has very liberally allowed them to be printed in a collected form. The real name of their author is now given, for the sole reason that, a short time since, the pseudonyme of *Paul Pindar* was adopted — doubtless unwittingly — by the author of a political satire—a species of literary composition to which the writer of these rustic sketches never aspired.

Whatever may be the merit of these Tales, it will not be denied that they contain fair examples of the dialect of North Wiltshire and parts of Gloucestershire,

Berkshire, and Hampshire, or that they are faithful pictures of rustic life in those counties at the present day.

But the schoolmaster has been active, and material changes have taken place, even in our English dialects, during the last forty years. Time, and the facility of intercommunication, are daily wearing away the traces of an older form of speech:—

"Damnosa quid non imminuit dies?"

and those now amongst us may live long enough to witness still further innovation!

EASTER MONDAY,
1853.

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WILTSHIRE TALES.

DICK DAFTER.

"A thefe he was forsoth of corn and mele,
And that a slie, and usant for to stele."

CHAUCER'S *Reve's Tale.*

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

Which treats of an early incident in the life of Dick Dafter.

OF the birth and parentage of Dick Dafter nothing is positively known; and, as is the case with regard to many others who have become famous in their generation, nobody ever gave themselves the trouble to inquire touching these matters, until it was perceived that he was not an every-day personage. Then conjecture was forthwith busy. Some said he was the illegitimate offspring of a sporting nobleman; others quoted the butler at "the great house;" while a third party talked something still more

scandalous, which we don't mean to retail here, our business being to record facts, and not opinions. To begin, then, with the authentic period of Dick Dafter's history:—he was discovered, a helpless squalling infant, on a hay-stack, by Master Radaway's carter, when he went to procure fodder for the cattle one bitter cold morning in the month of January. There was no fear of his being cut in two with the hay-knife, for he was squalling with all his might; and Tom Smith, the carter, thought it was the cry of a hare caught in a springe, or fastened upon by a weasel, when he first entered the rick-yard. On reaching the stack, however, he beheld by the gray light of early dawn the little imp kicking and squealing vehemently, and taking it up, he rolled it in his frock, and carried it into the house to show his master. The first person he encountered was Miss Rachel, the farmer's maiden sister and housekeeper, who, supposing it was a new-born lamb which the carter had brought in, began to ask some questions regarding its dam, when the servant, unfolding his frock, discovered to her astonished eyes the little brat he had picked up.

"Massey upon us!" exclaimed the spinster, "what has't got there, Tom? What yelding's brat 's that?"

"I'm zhure I dwon't know, missus," replied Tom, grinning. "I just picked un up i' th' rick-yard."

"Lor', what did e' bring un here for?" cried Miss Rachel. "We dwon't want none o' them things. Go and put th' little varment where 'e vound un."

"Bless 'e, missus, a'd be vriz to death if a was to be left where I vound un; do 'e take un in."

"A shan't come in here! a shan't come in here!" vociferated his mistress, waxing warm. "Go and find out the slut a belongs to."

"Depend upon 't, a aint to be vound in a hurry, missus," said Tom, endeavouring to pacify the infant, which now recommenced squalling and kicking. "Won't 'e take un in while I gwoes and vinds somebody as 'll take un to the workhus."

"No, I'll be drattled if I do," cried Miss Rachel. "We 've plenty o' live things in th' house a'ready. Go and find out the nasty hussy as left the brat."

"I can't vind un, missus," rejoined the serving man. "Do 'e let m' put un down to the vire a bit, till maester comes in, or a 'll perish wi' cowld vor a zartinty, and then there 'll be a crowner's quest, and that 'll be a ackerdish job vor us."

"Don't talk to me, I tell th'," cried the lady; "don't talk to me about ackerd jobs. I tell th' I 'll not have other people's brats in my house; so take the young varment away directly."

Tom Smith, finding remonstrance of no avail, was about to obey this harsh command, when Master Radaway entered.

"Hity-tyty!" cried he, "here 's a pretty caddle! What 's all this about, Tom? What has 't got there?"

"A *babby*, maester," said Tom, holding up the infant. "Poor leetle zowl! a wants his mother bad enough."

"A babby!" echoed the farmer. "Why, where in the neam o' patience did 'e find un?

"Top o' th' hayrick, maester, squallin' away like vengeance."

"Poor little twoad!" said the farmer, in a sympathising tone; "what shall us do wi' un?"

"Do with un! do with un!" cried Miss Rachel, darting a fierce look at her brother; "why, take un to the workhouse, to be sure. What did *you* think of doing with the brat, brother William?"

"Why, take care of un, to be sure, sister," replied the kind-hearted farmer. "A musn't be left to perish because a's mother aint a honest woman,—more 's her sheum."

"You don't mean to say you'll *keep* that child, Master Radaway?" demanded the spinster, reddening with anger.

"Why, I dwon't exactly kneow," replied the farmer, thrusting his hands into his breeches' pockets, with an air of affected indifference; "may be I shall, sister Rachel."

"Then you may get somebody else to keep house for you; for here I won't stay if I lives," was the rejoinder; and Miss Rachel flounced out of the hall.

"Nobody cares much about that," said Master Radaway. "Come here, Tom, and bring the young un to the vire."

"Shall I get a drap o' milk, and *tiddle* un a leetle, maester?" inquired Tom.

"Ha! to be sure!" said the farmer, rubbing his hands. "Put un into the basket that's in the cheese-room, and get us a bottle wi' some milk."

Tom, who had often assisted the young lambs in the same way, soon procured the therewith to fashion the pseudo teat, and master and man did their best to perform the office of wet nurse to the unfortunate foundling.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

Which demonstrates the truth of the proverb that "ill weeds grow apace," and also shows that excessive covetousness may lead a man to confound *meum* and *tuum*.

NOTWITHSTANDING Master Radaway's affected contempt for his sister's objections, he was unwilling to try her temper too far, and therefore, with due regard to his own interest (for Miss Rachel, though a scold, was a good housekeeper), sent the child to a poor widow in the neighbourhood, promising her a weekly sum for its support. Of course this act of humanity was considered by many as anything but disinterested; but the farmer cared little for ill-natured remarks, and

derived a pleasure in watching the growth of his protégé, who thrived apace, and promised to become a strapping lad. Time rolled away; Master Radaway grew old; and his sister, who was some five years his senior, became infirm, deaf, and still more bad tempered; while Dick, who had taken the name of his foster-parent, had reached the age of sixteen. He had been taught the rudiments of reading and writing at the farmer's expense, at a small school in the neighbouring village; but, if his education was meagre, he was amply compensated for it by a large stock of that low cunning, which in the commerce of life sometimes avails a man more than brilliant genius. He obtained constant employment on Master Radaway's farm, and very often a meal at the house, notwithstanding the evident dislike with which he was regarded by Miss Rachel. Sometimes he was intrusted with a load to the neighbouring town, and Dick did not fail to profit by such trips; for, on market days especially, there is always an assemblage of loose fellows on the look out for flats. By observing the feats of such gentry, he soon became adept in the legerdemain of the dice-box and the pea and thimble, and succeeded to

admiration in fleecing the poor clowns with whom he mingled at home. With this ill-gotten money he purchased a pig or two, which turned out profitably; for,

> "— Satan's wiser than in days of yore,
> And tempts by making rich, not making poor;"

and when his foster-mother died, Dick Dafter rented the cottage she had occupied, and thrived beyond the comprehension of his neighbours. Some persons, however, shrewdly conjectured that he was occasionally assisted by Master Radaway, and this perhaps shielded him from the more rigid scrutiny of the suspicious. But when Dick quitted the cottage, and took a larger habitation, with an outhouse adjoining it, some of his neighbours did not fail to indulge in remarks anything but favourable to his character.

Everybody knows that in remote country places a wary cunning rogue has, under cover of the night, abundant opportunity of robbing his neighbours. Dick Dafter knew this well; for he had often proved it to his own satisfaction, and the loss of those whose homesteads he visited. There was not a padlock in the parish

of which he had not a key, and his nocturnal visits had caused the dismissal of more than one honest servant. Of course, farmer Radaway was honoured above all others, and contributions were every week levied on his hen-roost, his barn, his faggot-pile, or his hay-rick. Still the thief remained undiscovered; and those who took upon themselves to watch o' nights soon gave it up, so wary was the plunderer.

The only creature with whom Dick Dafter was upon terms of intimacy was one Mr. John Eagleton, or, as he was styled by his neighbours, *Jack* Eagleton, a man who followed the vocation of a wheelwright, but who, like his friend, jobbed in anything likely to be profitable. This fellow also had a kind of general store-house, which was filled with more than the honest earnings of its tenant. Between Dick Dafter and this man there was a very close friendship, if the unhallowed compact of the dishonest may be so designated. If they were at the neighbouring town on a market day, they came home together, and they were often seen to visit each other at a late hour in the evening; still nothing more than vague and general suspicions were entertained of them by the majority of their neighbours.

At length the farmer's increasing years and infirmities rendered it necessary that he should have assistance, and accordingly, one of his nephews, a powerful, resolute young man, came to live with him, and look after the farm. This was almost a death-blow to Dick Dafter; and, as may be expected, a mutual and settled hatred between him and the new-comer was the consequence. In spite of the farmer's intercession, Dick was forbidden to come into the house, and Ned Radaway, backed by his aunt Rachel, whose dislike of Dick could never be suppressed, was all powerful. Hearing that the farm was so often visited by depredators, he determined to keep a strict watch for the thieves. He frequently rose in the dead of the night, and with his double-barrelled gun on his shoulder marched round the premises, and visited every outhouse. At the least noise among the poultry, or the cattle, he was on the *qui vive;* and the farm being so well watched, the visits of Dick Dafter were rendered doubly hazardous. Indeed, since young Radaway's arrival, he had been constrained to go farther afield, and abandon what had hitherto proved to him the most lucrative locality in the whole neighbourhood.

This infringement of the rights of Dick Dafter possessed him with the most deadly hatred of the man whom he considered an interloper, and the desire of revenge occupied his sordid soul, to the exclusion of every other passion,—even that of the all-engrossing one of covetousness. Had he possessed courage, he would have resented the bitter gibes which he met with occasionally from the young farmer as he passed through the village, by a challenge to fight; but cunning was Dick's weapon, and he knew well how to wield it.

One night he entered the house of his neighbour and friend, Jack Eagleton, and having closed the door after him, and looked cautiously around, intimated that he had an important communication to make.

"Ha!" said Jack, "what 'st got to zay, mun?"

"Ned Radaway," whispered Dick, with a significant shake of the head.

"What ov he?" queried Eagleton.

"I'll tell 'e in a minnit," replied Dick; "but gi' m' breath. You must kneow that thuck chap means to bring the constable, and zee whether all the property y' ave got be honestly come by."

"The devil he does!"

"Ah, devil or no devil, a means to do't," said Dick; "zo y'd better luk about'e, and put away anything as looks querish like."

Jack Eagleton uttered a prolonged "Wh—ew!" and a horrible imprecation, which must not be written down.

"A'll vind *that* a toughish job, I b'leeves," said he, after a pause.

"Ye can't help yerself, Jack," remarked the other, tauntingly; "ye'd better put up wi't."

Jack swore another horrible oath. "I'd blow 's brains out vust," said he, savagely. "An Englishman's hous' is his cassel."

"Ye won't vind yourn any zuch theng," observed Dick, who could scarcely repress the joy he felt at perceiving that his trumped-up story had the desired effect.

"Let un try't—let un try't," vociferated Jack, "and if I dwon't put a ball drough 's yead, I wish I may be zhot m'zelf zome day!"

"A zays a'll transport th', Jack."

"He!" vociferated the ruffian; "*he!* transport m'! Noa, noa, not quite so vast. If *I* be transported, *he*'ll never live to zee't."

"What do'e mean, mun?" inquired Dick, with scarcely-suppressed exultation.

"Mean?" replied the other, with a savage scowl, and in an audible whisper; "why, that if I *be* transported, 'twill be vor riddin' the world of such a varment as he!"

"You dwon't mean to zay you'd murder un?"

"I means to zay so, and I means to do't, too," said Eagleton, pulling out the table-drawer, in which lay a couple of horse-pistols, with a bullet-mould, powder-flask, &c. "Here's the tackle to work wi'. You 'll help m', Dick?"

This question was a poser. Dick had never anticipated being thus invited, and he made several awkward attempts to wriggle out of his dilemma.

"Coom, coom," said Eagleton, in a determined tone, "this won't do, Dick. This is as much your bus'ness as mine; for if he ain't put out o' th' way, he'll ruin bwoth on us vor a zartinty."

"But how be we to do't?" inquired Dick, with a rueful look, perceiving that he was entangled in the meshes of his own net. "How be we to do't, Jack?"

"Do't!" vociferated, Eagleton "why, when a's comin' whoam vrom markut, to be zure. A'll ha' zome money about un then."

"Hush!" said Dick; "speak gently, or zomebody'll hear'e;" and drawing his chair nearer to that of his friend, they proceeded to discuss the best method of destroying their common enemy.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

In which the friendship of Dick Dafter and Jack Eagleton terminates abruptly.

Two or three days after the conference described in the preceding chapter, Mr. Ned Radaway was at the market of the neighbouring town. In the evening several farmers were assembled at the inn, among whom was Mr. Ned Radaway, who during the day had received a considerable sum of money on account of his uncle.

"A hunked road that o' yourn, Maester Etherd," said one of the company,—"I shouldn't like to travel un wi'out company."

"Ha, and wi' zo much money about m'," remarked another.

"I shouldn't mind it, though, if I had such a hos as his'n," said a third.

"Oh, ye needn't be afeard o' me," cried the young man, drawing a large horse-pistol, heavily loaded with slugs, from the breast-pocket of his coat. "Here 's enough for *one*, at any rate."

"Lor' a massey!" ejaculated the first speaker, "why, a 's charged up to the muzzle, Maester Etherd!"

"Then a'll hit the harder," remarked the young man; and, having paid his reckoning, he quitted the room, mounted his horse, and trotted off homeward.

It was a beautiful April evening. The last tinge of sunset had faded away in the west, and the round red disc of the full moon was just rising, and lighting up the valley, as young Radaway descended the hill, when, arriving at a lonely part of the road, flanked on one side by a copse of hazel and ground ash, and on the other by several very ancient elms, two men, in short white frocks, and wearing crape over their faces, suddenly confronted him.

Without saying a word, the foremost man made a snatch at the young farmer's bridle, and at the same instant presented and snapped a pistol, which burnt priming.

"Thank'e! and take that for your pains!" cried Edward Radaway, drawing forth his pistol, and firing on his opponent.

The man, uttering a cry of anguish, dropped his weapon, reeled backwards several paces, and sunk on his knees.

Though a bold fellow, the young farmer was fully aware of his danger, and conscious that by that one discharge he was rendered defenceless, he plunged his spurs into his horse's flanks, and dashed at full gallop down the hill.

The other man, who seemed completely paralysed by the unexpected resistance they had met with, threw down the pistol he held, tore the crape from his face, and approached his wounded companion, who was groaning bitterly.

"Jack, Jack," said he, horror-struck, and in a stifled voice, "bist hurted *much?*"

The wounded man replied by a torrent of dreadful imprecations, and gasped for breath. The closeness of the discharge had actually

burnt the crape which had covered his face, and there was a large round black patch on the breast of his white frock, from the centre of which a stream of blood was pouring.

"Cuss th' vor a coward!" said he faintly; "why didn't 'e shoot un? I 'm a dead man; but thee 'lt be hung,—that 's one comfort!"

Dick Dafter—for it was he who was addressed—seemed spell-bound; his knees knocked together, and his whole frame was shaken as if palsied. Meanwhile his companion, writhing with pain, entreated him to procure assistance. This appeal awakened Dick to the danger of his own situation, and he replied,—

"O Lar', noa, noa; what be I to do? If I gwoes for help they 'll zeize m'!"

"And zarve 'e right, y' cowardly dastard!" groaned Eagleton,—"they 'll hang th', and I shall die happy to know that thee 'st bin caught!"

Dick believed every word of this; and fear for his own safety prompted him to fly. Eagleton perceived his intention, and grasping him by the leg, with a convulsive clutch, cried,—

"Noa, noa, cuss th'! ye beaynt gone 'et! I 'll hold th' till zomebody comes."

Frantic with terror, Dick struggled to release himself, while the wounded wretch grasped him with all his remaining strength, and strove to call out and give the alarm; but, his voice becoming each moment more feeble, could not have been heard a hundred yards off.

"Let go," at length Dick said, "and I'll vetch zomebody to 'e."

The expiring villain smiled bitterly and shook his head, for the power of speech had now forsaken him. He knew his man; and, though dying, he held on tightly.

"Let go!" roared Dick again; but still the grasp was firmly fixed on his leg. "Let go, I tell th'."

With these words he renewed his endeavours to escape.

"Well, then, if th' woot ha' 't," he cried raising his foot, "take 't, and be cussed to th'!" and, dealing the dying man a violent kick in the face with the toe of his heavy-nailed laced boot, he freed himself, and fled into the copse by the side of the road.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Which shows that bolts and bars may not always keep out the thief.

THAT instinctive cunning which always availed Dick Dafter in extremity, stood him in great need at this critical juncture. He saw that his only chance of safety was to make for home with all the speed he could use. The high road to the village was circuitous, but the distance was inconsiderable across the fields, and over these he flew on the wings of terror, bounding over ditches and through hedges with the speed of a hunted hare.

He soon reached his house, and, entering at the rear, he unbolted the front door, lit his pipe, and sat himself down in the chimney corner, in anticipation of a visit, for he felt assured that the young farmer could not have recognised him, and hoped, in the event of a neighbour calling, to make it appear that he had been at home for some time. This artful trick succeeded to admiration, as will be seen hereafter.

Meanwhile, young Radaway had reached home, and related his adventure on the road, to the great consternation of his uncle and aunt. The news soon spread through the village, and every bad or suspected character far or near was by turns pointed at as likely to have made such an attempt. The mystery was, however, partly unveiled early the next morning, when some labourers, going to their work, discovered the body of Jack Eagleton, dead and stiff, by the road-side, his pistols lying near him.

At the inquest held on the body of the slain ruffian it was proved that one of these weapons had burnt priming, for it still contained the charge, though the powder in the pan had been ignited, and the cock was down, thus confirming the account which Ned Radaway had given of the transaction.

During the investigation, one of the villagers, in answer to a question put to him by the coroner, deposed that at the very time of the attack on the young farmer he called upon Dick Dafter to borrow a hammer, and that he found him at home, quietly smoking his pipe. There was no design in the giving of this evidence;

the man stated what he believed to be true; and the answer returned to the question, which had originated with the young farmer (who, though he could identify neither of his assailants, had a lurking suspicion of Dick Dafter), tended to remove any doubt which had been entertained to his prejudice.

Freed, therefore, from the *legal* consequences of his participating in the crime of attempted murder, Dick Dafter breathed more freely, but he was perpetually haunted by the fear of encountering the ghost of his late associate. If but a bennet touched the calf of his leg after nightfall, fancy made it appear to his terrified senses like the clutch of the wounded wretch whom he had maltreated and abandoned in his dying moments. Horrible dreams haunted him throughout the night, and in the day time the countenance of Eagleton, writhing with agony, was constantly before his eyes; yet he dared not make any man his confidant.

By degrees, however, this fearful excitement abated, and Dick resumed his peculations whenever an opportunity presented itself. His dishonesty was ingrain, and like a rank weed,

which has been cropped, and not rooted up, it now burst forth again with tenfold vigour.

Meanwhile Ned Radaway's vigilance relaxed, as his uncle's property was respected—at least, so it appeared,—for the same number of fowls came to be fed in the morning, the faggot-pile was not diminished in height and bulk, and the hay-ricks remained as they had been left over night; nevertheless, others suffered by the secret visits of Dick, and the thief remained undiscovered. It happened, however, one day, that the young farmer had occasion to remove a quantity of wheat in the granary. After filling a few sacks, it struck him that the bulk had been unaccountably diminished, but he had no means of ascertaining this until nearly the whole of it had been measured, when it plainly appeared that the heap had been visited by some creature larger than a rat.

Ned Radaway scratched his head, and was sorely perplexed at this discovery, for he was convinced that his uncle had been plundered; and he was considering how the place could have been entered (the door having a patent lock which could not be picked), when one of the

men struck his corn-shovel on a *cork* sticking in the floor.

"Hallo!" cried the fellow, "what be this, Maester Etherd!"—then stooping down,—"danged if it be n't a *cark!*"

"A *cark!* no?"

"Eez it be, though," said the man, drawing it out; "and there's another, and another! Cunnin' wosbirds as did this, Maester Etherd!"

Ned Radaway scratched his head a second time and shook it too. The discovery was confounding: he saw in a moment that with all his vigilance the granary had been robbed, and that to an extent difficult to be calculated. The thief, by boring holes in the floor with an auger, had helped himself whenever he pleased, and stopped the apertures with corks, which could be quickly removed, and returned as soon as he had filled his sack.

Our young farmer having recovered a little from his surprise at this curious discovery, began to consider how he might set a trap for the thief.

"I'd give a pound bill to anybody as 'ou'd find out the rascal," observed he.

"Wou'd 'e, Maester Etherd?" said one of the

men; "then I 'll be bound ye 'll vind un out if 'e keeps this a zecret, and takes no notice ov 't. A 'll zhure to come agen if 'e put zome more carn auver they carks."

"A capital thought, Tom," said young Radaway; "but mind, if we dwon't find out the thief I shall think zomebody 's been blabbing."

"Oh, never vear we," cried the men in one breath. "We 'll take care o' that, maester."

The men, who knew that they might be suspected of the robbery, were delighted at the opportunity of discovering the depredator, and accordingly the matter was kept a secret even from Farmer Radaway himself, the remainder of the corn being left over that part of the floor which had been perforated.

Ned Radaway felt assured that the thief would not renew his operations until the change of the moon, and accordingly deferred his watch until the first dark night, when, provided with good cudgels, a pair of handcuffs, and a dark lantern, they stole unobserved from the house, and laid themselves down on some straw beneath the granary. Here they remained till the village-clock struck one, without hearing any sound to awaken

suspicion. It was pitchy dark, and no object could be seen at an arm's length.

"It 's of no use," observed the young farmer in a whisper, becoming impatient, and finding himself growing cold. "A 'll not come to-night, depend upon 't."

"Hush! hush! Maester Etherd!" said Tom; "bide still; I thenks I hears vootsteps."

Ned Radaway held in his breath and listened: something was certainly moving at a distance,—a gate creaked, as if some one was getting over it; then a heavy body alighted with caution, and advanced towards the granary. The watchers remained immoveable; they felt their hearts throb as the footsteps came nearer and nearer, and were not a little perplexed at their being unlike those of an ordinary person. The foot-ball, instead of resembling the usual heavy tread of a nailed boot, was like that of some wild animal. In another moment the visitor came under the granary, a sack was thrown down, and the watchers heard the horny hand of a man brush the flooring of the granary, as if feeling for the corks.

It had been agreed that the thief should be

suffered to fill his sack, and the watchers accordingly lay perfectly still until they thought he had accomplished his object.

"A runs slowish," said the thief to himself, trying the weight of the sack; "a aint ha'f vull 'et. I wishes I'd got owld Radaway's cussed nephee in un—"

"Suppose I helps you put him in!" said Ned Radaway, creeping behind, and seizing him with a determined grasp by the throat. "What! I 've got 'e at last, have I!"

"Oh Lard! oh Lard!" roared the terrified scoundrel; "I 'm a dead man! dwont 'e drottle m', Maester Etherd."

"No, the hangman 'll do that all in good time," said the young farmer bitterly. "Show a light here, Tom; though I know who 'tis by 's voice."

"Pray dwon't 'e howld m' zo tight," cried Dick; "I be a'most choked,—let m' gwo. I won't run away."

"No, no,—we 'll take care o' that," said Ned Radaway with a laugh. "Show a light here."

The man turned his lantern upon the detected night-prowler, and discovered the well-known features of Dick Dafter!

"Oh y' precious varment!" cried Tom,—"I should like to zee th' hung as high as Haman! —how many poor honest bodies ha' been zuspected vor thee! Why, no wonder we cou'dn't make out thee vootsteps—th'ast got no zhoes on!

Dick was stupified by terror, and shook like a dog on a wet sack. He suffered himself to be handcuffed without uttering a word. What, in fact, *could* he have said for himself, thus caught in the very act of plundering his best benefactor? As they led him into the house, to secure him for the night, he mentally wished that he had met the fate of his old associate in villany, Jack Eagleton.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

Which treats of the last incident in the life of Dick Dafter.

THE next morning the whole village was in an uproar. Everybody had heard of the capture of Dick Dafter in the very act of robbing Farmer Radaway's granary, and scores of people crowded round his house, which was undergoing

a search by the constable. It would be tedious to recount what was found on the premises; it will be sufficient to say that the plunder hidden in various ways comprised specimens of every portable object. Missing utensils of husbandry were found secreted in the most artful manner. Bacon, cheeses, grain of various kinds,—some of which could be identified,—were discovered in places which could never have been suspected by those unaccustomed to such searches. The place was justly likened to the nest of a magpie, for some of the articles could have been "of no use to any one but the owner," and must have been taken for thieving's sake.

Dick Dafter was that day examined before a magistrate, and committed to the county jail. His trial followed shortly after, and the evidence was so conclusive that the jury had no difficulty in agreeing on a verdict. The result was, that Dick Dafter was duly hanged, as a warning to evil-doers, and an example to the rising generation of clodpoles. On the morning of his execution he made to the chaplain of the prison a full confession of all his robberies, and gave an

account of his participation in the attempt on young Radaway.

Thus ended the career of a rustic scamp of the first water. Probably some novelist yet unborn may hereafter write his history in livelier colours, and prove him to have been the son of a great man, possessed of generous sentiments, all which may be very edifying; but be it remembered that our history is the *true one*.

GILES CHAWBACON;

OR, THE ADVENTURES OF A MOONRAKER.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

In which Giles's penchant for bread and cheese is illustrated, and in which he eschews the discipline of the mop.

"MOTHER!" cried young Giles Chawbacon, with his mouth crammed full, a huge hunk of bread and cheese in his left hand, and a clasp-knife in the other,—"mother, cut I 'nother bit 'g'in I done thick!"

Mistress Chawbacon was a vixen, as her red-tipped and sharp nose plainly indicated; and being at the moment busily engaged in her household duties, she gave no heed to the supplication of her hopeful son.

"Mother!" cried Giles again; but ere he could articulate another word, his amiable parent seized the mop, and vibrating it in his face, threatened to annihilate him, accompanying the action with a torrent of abuse.

"'Od drattle the greedy wosbird!" cried the dame. "Thee bist the very spit o' thee vather, and 'll come to the gallus as zhure's death."

Giles received this maternal address with great fortitude, continuing the demolition of the bread and cheese. The fact was, that he had long been used to such harangues, and had become hardened. His mamma continued to lecture him upon this voracity.

"Ha'f a dozen varment like thee, 'ou'd breed a vamin'," said the dame, again shaking the mop. "Thee bist yeatin' all day."

"I'm zhure I be n't, mother," replied the boy. "I dwon't yeat ha'f as much as Jonas."

"Dwon't 'e be peart, ye young twoad!" cried Mistress Chawbacon, reddening like a turkey-cock, "or I'll break thee mazzard vor thee!"

There was an audible silence for some minutes, interrupted only by the sound of Giles's molares; at length he ventured to speak again.

"Mother," said he, "gie I a piece more bread; I yeats a good deal o' bread wi' my cheese."

"Ah! and a plaguy deal o' cheese wi' thee bread," cried his affectionate parent, cutting him a slice with a grudging air.

"Thank'e, mother, thank'e," said Giles, perceiving that his *ruse* had taken; "now a piece o' cheese, mother."

"Now, upon my zowl!" cried Mistress Chawbacon, "I do think thee bist a mind to yeat us out o' house and whome."

"Lor', mother!" replied Giles; dwon't 'e be so aveard on 't—such a cheese as thuck beaynt yeat zo vast."

He pointed to the diminished disc as he spoke with his clasp-knife, just as a general would show the damaged wall of an outwork after an assault. The effect was to rouse the ire of his parent to its highest pitch.

"Dal thee body!" cried the dame at the top of her voice. "If th' doesn't get out o' the house, I'll break every bwone in thee skin!"

With these words she again flourished her household weapon so menacingly, that Giles, finding the place had really become too hot to hold him, beat a retreat, and bolted out at the door.

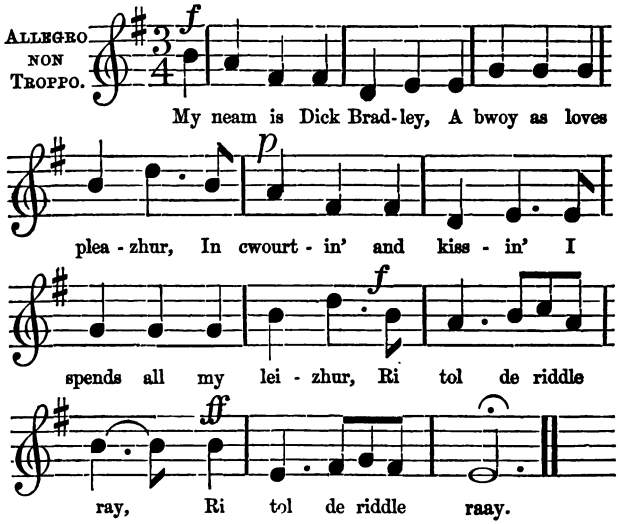
Our chopstick didn't venture to look behind him until he had cleared the little garden in front of the cottage; but when he did look, he

saw his mamma's angry visage at the door, her long skinny fingers grasping the mop, and her sharp hazel eyes looking pitchforks. He felt that he had decamped just in time to avoid a broken head, and the rumpling of his clean smock frock, which he had that morning put on to go to Highworth *Mop*, as the annual fairs where servants are hired are called by the good people of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire.

'What a caddle th' owld body's makin'," said Giles to himself, finding that he was out of ear-shot; "how a'll gi' it vather when a comes whoame!"

With these reflections, Giles finished the crust, of which he still retained possession, and trudged on his way to Highworth, singing lustily snatches of a west country ditty.*

* Happening to remember the *airs* of some of these ditties, which we have often heard in our youth, we are tempted to insert them here, that they may not be utterly lost to posterity. Though we cannot entirely coincide in opinion with an inestimable friend, that "some of them are as old as Moses,"—yet that they were known in England when Norman-French was not the polite language of this island seems very probable. That songs to *such tunes* were sung in the halls of the Saxon Thanes, before the Norman invasion,



CHAPTER THE SECOND.

In which Giles Chawbacon, eschewing one mop, betakes himself to another.

Oh, ye dwellers in the land of Cockaigne, who fancy that the sun rises at Barking and sets at Putney! who twice a week catch, perchance, a

may be inferred from their evident primitive character, and from the fact of their being preserved among a people in whose language many purely Anglo-Saxon words may yet be discovered.

glimpse of that glorious luminary when on the meridian, but who find consolation in a galaxy of gas-lights at midnight! how shall we describe to you the appearance of a country market-place on the day of a *Mop!* Permit us to attempt the sketch, but assist our feeble pen by drawing a little on your imaginations. Fancy, then, rows of men and women decked in their best, all standing in the market-place, waiting to be hired. Look at those who compose the hireling ranks, and if any of you are physiognomists, there will be ample subject matter, we warrant you. Perhaps the *outlines* of the human countenance are studied to more advantage in the country than elsewhere. At least, this is *our* fancy, and we have occasionally indulged it. Observe that tall, sunburnt young man, with a well-defined and clear brow, an aquiline nose, bright eye, and expressive mouth. Ten to one but he is a distant shoot from families once honoured in the county. Not so with the fellow who stands next to him, whose large and vulgar mouth, laughing eyes, set far apart, and low forehead, proclaim him a clown of twenty descents—the twentieth (not merely the

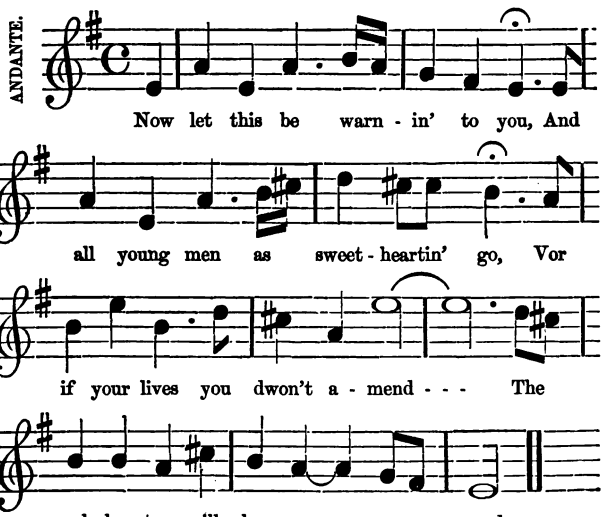
tenth) transmitter of a foolish face. Such a man will never beget a Shakespeare or a Newton. But it was not our intention to moralise when we set out. Our business is with Giles Chawbacon, who arrived at Highworth without any adventure worth recording. He passed the inns usually occupied by the farmers on market-days, from the open windows of which clouds of tobacco-smoke were pouring and perfuming the air far and near. Similar vapours rolled from the tap-rooms of those inns in which the idle and dissolute, who had come to let themselves out for the year, were indulging in their favourite stimulants of stale beer and "brown shag;" not without a sprinkling of those who, more fortunate than their fellows, had been engaged almost as soon as the mop began, and who were regaling themselves previous to their going into harness. Within these dens of low debauchery were heard snatches of ale-house songs, such as

She wrote her love a lovin' letter,
And zealed un wi' a ring,
To come disgui-sed as a tinker,
Or else just like a king.
Wi' me too ral loo! &c.

Occasionally something more pathetic might be heard:—

He *drowed* her in among the tharns,
Wi' the leetle babby all in her arms.

Or:—



Giles Chawbacon, resisting the threefold temptations of shag-tobacco, beer, and singing, went and took his stand among the crowd of servants. His smockfrock was as white as drifted snow; his scarlet waistcoat just peeped out

above it at the throat, and held rivalry with his red, chubby cheeks; while his boots were closely laced with new white thongs, which he had bought at the saddler's a week before, in order that he might make a decent appearance at the mop.

While Giles was thus standing, a tall, gaunt, frosty-visaged man, with a broad-brimmed hat, snuff-coloured coat, greasy buckskin breeches, and top-boots, came up, and eyeing him for some seconds, asked what were his qualifications? Our chopstick was not foolishly modest; but gave such an account of himself as induced the interrogator to resolve on making a trial of his services. After a little haggling, Giles agreed to enter his service as an in-door servant for the prodigious wages of five pounds per annum!

Messieurs William and Jacob Twink were farmers and millers, and were said to be people "well to do in the world." William (he with the spare figure and frosty face) was a stingy, miserly being, who, like the famous Elwes, would rob a rook's nest to make a fire. Jacob, on the contrary, was a short, fat, pursy, red-gilled little man, with a laughing merry eye, a sensual mouth, and a nose which looked earthward, and

glowed at the tip like a fire-fly. His sole delight was in imbibing some kind of fluid—"no matter what," as he said, "so that it was wet." The moral and physical contrast between the two brothers was most complete, and Giles could never persuade himself that they were sons of the same mother. Albeit, he managed to live with tolerable comfort; for, though short commons was sometimes the order of the day with the elder Mr. Twink, what he did get was eaten in *peace;* moreover, he was daily adding to his stock of knowledge; from Mr. William Twink he received lessons in thrift, from Mr. Jacob Twink lessons in cunning, as will be hereafter shown.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

Which treats of Giles's *tête-à-tête* with Master Jacob, and also shows that a gimlet may be used for more purposes than one.

Mr. William Twink, notwithstanding his miserly disposition, kept a cask or two of the "very best" in his cellar; but this was never touched except upon special occasions; the ordi-

nary drink of the house being beer of the *very smallest* description, real "belly vengeance," as Mr. Jacob termed it.

Mr. William Twink went regularly to market once a week; and on those days, in order to pacify his brother, who wished to share that honour, he was in the habit of intrusting him with the key of the cellar, a privilege of which Mr Jacob did not fail to avail himself. One morning, having donned his snuff-coloured coat, and drawn on his top-boots, the elder brother prepared to set out for market; but ere he mounted his horse, finding his tobacco-pouch empty, he examined the edge of the thatch which covered the stable, in which he was in the habit of thrusting his half-chewed quids. Having found one which appeared to be less reduced than the rest, he clapped the savoury morsel in his mouth, and, bestriding his ancient steed, jogged out into the road.

Mr. Jacob Twink watched his brother out of sight from the window of the mill, and quietly descending, left Giles in charge of it, rolled into the kitchen, and repaired to the cellar, where he drew and drank about a quart of small beer. Then filling the measure again, he betook him-

self to the chimney-corner, filled his pipe, and entered on the confines of Elysium.

It is not our business to record how many times Master Jacob visited the cellar during the afternoon, nor how often he replenished his jug or his pipe; it will be sufficient for the reader of this veritable history to know, that by the evening, owing to the combined effects of drink and tobacco smoke, he plainly saw two jugs, two pipes, two tables, in short, duplicates of everything around him, which he thought devilish funny, attributing it to a weakness in the eyes. The clock had two faces,—there were a couple of cats lying before the fire, whereas they usually had but a solitary tabby, well stricken in years. Moreover, there were two candles burning at the same time,—a piece of extravagance which would have driven his brother mad had he witnessed it,—so Mr. Jacob essayed to blow one of them out, but, some how or other, it wouldn't go out; and, after puffing till he was out of breath, he abandoned his economical intention, and resolved to ask Giles to do it when he came in to supper.

"Gi-l-es," (hiccup!) "Giles!" said the pursy

yeoman—"Gil-es—blow out *thuck* candle—my m—an!"

"Lor' bless 'e, zur," cried Giles, "'e woudn't zit in th' dark, zurely."

"Blow un owt, I tell e'—blo—w un owt," repeated Master Jacob, with another hiccup. "If Willum come whoam and zees two a burnin', he'll make a vi—vi—vine caddle" (hiccup).

"There ain't but one, Maester Jacob," said Giles, perceiving with half an eye the state of affairs.

"He! he! he!" laughed Master Jacob; "dald, if I didn't thenk zo. My eyes gets uncommon bad. Zi—t down, Giles, zit down, do'e. Ye'll vind a pipe a top a' thuck cupboard, and there 's the backur—vill un up, and dwon't e' be aveard on't."

Giles did as he was bidden, and filling his pipe, soon enveloped himself in a cloud of smoke, through which he perceived at intervals the sleek shining face of his master, puffing away like a limekiln, or, to borrow a modern metaphor, like a locomotive engine.

"Giles," said Master Jacob, after a pause,

"you 're a ver—ver—y"—(hiccup)—"good lad, and deserves encourage"—(hiccup)—"ment!—very zober, too. I likes a zober, industrious young man, as a body can trust wi' the kay o' the barrel"—(hiccup). Here the interlocutor rummaged in his ample pocket, from which he extracted the key of the cellar. "Go and draw us a leetle drap more o' Willum's rot-gut."

Giles required no pressing, and having procured a fresh supply of the fluid upon which Master Jacob had bestowed so elegant an epithet, he assisted in the discussion of it, listening and grinning as he sipped and puffed, to the very edifying discourse of his entertainer. At length Master Jacob, getting with some difficulty on his legs, laid down his pipe, placed his forefinger by the side of his nose, and winked knowingly.

"Tell thee what, my boy," said he, "it 's wo'th summut to bide in this hunked place, and d—r—ink"—(hiccup)—"noth—in' but shmall beer. Come along wi' I, Giles, and I 'll put th'—up to a tr—ick—bring the ca—a—a—andle"—(hiccup)—"here's the kay

o' the knock m' down st—u—ff," holding up a small gimlet.

"Whoy, thuck ben't a kay, maester," said Giles, "that 's nothin' but a nail-passer."

"Howld thee to—n—gue, vor a vool!" hiccupped Master Jacob, "and come along wi' me, I tell th'." With these words, he reeled towards the cellar, followed by his pupil.

"Here!" cried Master Jacob, clapping his hand on a barrel yet untapped, "here 's the tackel! musn't touch *he*, though: I 've zucked 'un down to th—ird hoop a'ready. There 's 'nother—put th'—nail-passer into un."

Giles, handling the instrument, soon effected a breach in the side of the barrel.

"That 's yer zart!" cried Master Jacob, exultingly, handing him a straw. "Now taste un."

Giles, inserting the straw in the hole, a feat which Master Jacob in his happy state would have found scarcely practicable, took a long suck, and pronounced the liquor excellent; then Master Jacob essayed to "suck the monkey" in the same way. Giles thought he never would end; he swigged liked a half-weaned puppy, and his

hard breathing through his nose gave evidence of the vigorous draining to which the barrel was subjected. Suddenly he ceased, and fell flat on the floor of the cellar in a state of insensibility.

"Down a' comes, like a twoad from roost!" exclaimed Giles. "A's got enuf vor to-night."

At that moment the barking of the dogs and the tramp of horses' feet announced the return of Mr. William Twink.

Giles almost gave himself for lost; but, leaving Master Jacob to snore on the cold flooring of the cellar, he hastened to the stable-yard. It was fortunate for our serving-man that his master did not arrive a litte later; for, had he done so, Giles would probably have been discovered in the same happy state as Master Jacob. As it was, he affected not to have come from the cellar or kitchen; and Mr. William Twink having himself taken a pipe or two at market, did not perceive that his servant had been indulging in the fragrant weed. Mr. William Twink's rage and invective were therefore directed against his brother, who, however, was insensible to all reproach. Having assisted in removing the

drunkard to his bed, Giles crept to his own, blessing his stars that he had not been introduced to the barrel of strong beer an hour earlier.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Mr. William Twink volunteers a piece of philanthropy, which is ill requited.

The good folks of the neighbourhood did not fail to have many a hearty laugh at the expense of the Messieurs Twink; and Master Jacob's attack on his brother's cherished treble X was a subject of never-ending banter and raillery whenever he went abroad; for the elder brother in his wrath had told the whole story to a neighbour, who in his turn had told it to another, who told it to a third, until it had spread in less than a week all over the village, from whence it was soon carried to the neighbouring town. Mr. William Twink at length began to perceive that it would have been much better had he kept the story to himself; for people, after a time, proceeded to joke him on the subject. On market-days especially, he was subjected to a good deal of coarse

raillery, which, however, he always took in good part, observing, that he now gave Master Jacob his daily allowance, and kept the key of the cellar himself. But one day, having drunk more than his usual quantity at market, he was taken off his guard, and induced to join several young farmers, who had resolved, if possible, to send "old Skin-vlint," as they called him, home drunk. They succeeded so well, that Master William's tongue was unloosened, and he laughed and joked, and even sung, for their amusement. Suddenly, however, he recollected that the money he had received was still in the pocket of his leather inexpressibles. It was the close of the day, and the bank was shut, so there was no leaving it behind him; and when our farmer mounted his horse amid the bantering of his friends, he bethought himself of the chances of being robbed on the road, and the possibility of his being maltreated or murdered into the bargain, reflections which caused him to feel anything but comfortable. As he jogged along, he muttered to himself that the road was "uncommon hunked," and that it was "the very pleace vor a man to get 's droat cut in."

Before he had got half way home it was pitch dark, so that he could scarcely see his bridle-hand. His horse, however, knew the road as well, or better, than its master, and in this assurance Mr. William Twink considered himself tolerably safe, at least so far as his neck was concerned. He now moved on at a trot; but suddenly his steed stopped and snorted, and our farmer became aware that he had nearly ridden over somebody lying in the road.

"What bist a layin' there for?" cried Farmer Twink, in an angry tone. "Dost want thee brayns kicked out, mun?"

There was a kind of sleepy snort or grunt in reply to this polite appeal, and Mr. Twink, alighting from his horse, perceived something lying all of a heap; but the darkness did not allow him to distinguish whether it was man or beast. His doubts were, however, soon removed; for, laying his hand on the heap, the voice of a man, thick and stuttering like a drunkard's, exclaimed:

"Noa, noa, I wunt zwallow a drap more, I tell 'e. I 've had enuf vor any zober man."

"Very likely e' have," observed Mr. Twink,

"and a leetle drap beyand it; but that ain't no rayzon why 'e should lay here like a zack o' grayns."

"Who th' d—l bist thee callin' a zack o' grayns?" cried the prostrate man, awaking from his trance. "Thee 'dst better mind thee own bis'ness, mun."

"Get up out o' the road, I tell th'," continued Mr. Twink, not heeding the observation.

The drunkard replied wrathfully, "I zhant for thee!"

"Th' sha'st, though," cried Twink, getting in a passion with the obstinate man; for the drink had rendered him a little choleric and venturesome. "I'll move th' to th' road-zide."

With these words, he essayed to execute his design, when the drunken man endeavoured, though in vain, to scramble on his legs, crying out:

"Leave m' alone, y' wosbird!—keep thee vingers off, I tell 'e! I'll vight 'e for a pound-bill any day!"

Notwithstanding his strugglings and his threatenings, Mr. Twink managed to remove his ungrateful acquaintance on to the greensward

by the road-side; but scarcely had he accomplished that act of philanthropy, when the drunkard roared out, in a voice that might have been heard a mile off:

"Thieves! Thieves! Murder! Vire! He 's a pickin' my pockut! Mur—der! Vi—re! V————ire!"

"'Od dal th' vor 'n ungrateful varment!" cried Mr. Twink, giving his acquaintance a good kick. "'T zarves m' right vor touchin' th'."

Mounting his horse, our farmer trotted off, and as he held on his way he saw lights approaching the spot where he had so charitably exerted himself.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

In which Mr. William Twink's temper is subjected to another trial.

Mr. William Twink, on reaching home, found, to his infinite vexation, that his brother had been absent the whole of the afternoon. Giles could only inform him that Master Jacob

had taken himself off with a neighbour, who always made it a rule to come home drunk. On hearing this intelligence, Mr. William Twink's thoughts reverted to his adventure on the road, and very disagreeable conjectures followed. Could the man whom he had nearly ridden over, and who had returned his kindness by abusing and charging him with robbery, be his hopeful brother? The voice was not like his, certainly; but then drink might have disguised it, and his own hearing was a little obscured by what he had imbibed at market.

Notwithstanding these very uncomfortable reflections, Mr. Twink was too much incensed against his brother to send or go in search of him; so, bidding Giles to go to his cock-loft, he determined to bolt the door, and get to bed.

Strange dreams haunted the slumbers of Mr. William Twink. At one time he was seated in the parlour of the inn at Highworth, singing lustily "The Leathern Bottle," his favourite ditty; then the scene changed, and he was fighting a round with a man whom he had nearly ridden over in his way home. Suddenly he awoke; loud thumpings were heard at the

door of the house, mingled with the voices of men who desired admittance. Amazed and bewildered, our farmer leaped from his bed. His head ached sadly; for he had not slept long enough to abate the effects of the gin and water he had discussed that evening. His first care (supposing the men below were thieves come to rob the house) was to secrete the money he had brought home with him. The passage from his bed-room communicated with the mill, and Mr. Twink stealing thither, deposited the cash in the mouth of one of the sacks of wheat; then returning to his chamber, he opened the casement, popped out his head, and demanded what was the matter.

There was a loud "Haw! haw!" at the question, and two or three voices cried out, "It's Maester Jacob, zur!"

Mr. Twink muttered a terrible anathema against his brother.

"I won't own un," said he, wrathfully, "a 's no brother o' mine! Take and drow 'n into th' ospond!

"Noa, noa, maester," cried the same voices; "dwon't 'e—dwon't 'e be so malice-minded."

"I dwon't kear what becomes ov un; a shall never come into my house agen," continued Mr. Twink.

"Then what be *we* to do with un, maester?" asked the men.

Mr. Twink mused a while. "Drow'n in among the pegs," said he, after a pause, "or put un up in th' tallet! A shan't come in here to-night, if I lives." And, shutting to the casement in a passion, he proceeded to call up Giles, who was snoring away unconscious of what was passing.

Giles, yawning and scratching his head, descended at his master's bidding, and proceeded to make a bed for Master Jacob (who was in that state which a Wiltshire man pronounces "thoroughly drunk," *i.e.* unable to "zit, stand, or lay down wi'out being held,") in the loft over the stable, while Mr. Twink crept back to his pallet, vowing vengeance against his drunkard of a brother on the morrow.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

Which recounts the third trial of Mr. William Twink, and the mischance of Giles Chawbacon.

Mr. William Twink found when he rose in the morning, awakened by the clatter of the mill, that his headach had not quite left him, and that he had moreover overslept himself a full hour. Having hastily put on his clothes, he hurried into the mill to look after the money he had hidden in the sack of corn. Giles was busily employed, and Mr. Twink perceived that several sacks of grain, among which was the one he used as the depository of his cash on the previous night, had been moved. Seized with horrible misgivings, he inquired of Giles in a peremptory tone what had been done with the missing sack.

"Do'e mean that un as stood there, maester?" asked Giles, scratching his head, and wondering at his master's impatience.

"Eez, eez," replied the farmer, stamping; "what have 'e done wi' un?"

"Ho! I *ground un*, about ha'f an hour ago, zur," replied Giles, still wondering at his interrogator's frantic look.

"*Ground un!—ground un!*" roared the farmer.

"Eez, zur," answered Giles, marvelling what crime he had committed;—then observing that his master trembled violently, "Bless m' zoul, if I dwon't think our maester's got the ager! How a hackers an bivers, to be zhure!"

"Od drattle thee vool's vace!" cried Mr. Twink, clenching and shaking his fist in a furious manner, "tell m' what th' ast done wi' the *money* in thuck zack!"

"Zack!—money!—Lor' bless us! our maester's gone out ov's wits!" cried Giles, beginning to be alarmed at his violent manner.

"Where's the money I put in th' zack, you hang-gallus?" roared Mr. Twink. "Where's the money, I tell th'?"

"I ain't zeed any money," replied Giles, sulkily.

"What!" cried his master, "didn't 'e look into the zack before 'e emptied un into th' hopper?"

"Lor', zur, noa, noa, not I! Who'd a thought o' zeein' money in a zack o' whate!"

Mr. Twink groaned in anguish, for more than half the money consisted of the notes of country banks, or "pound bills," as they call them (very fragile things to be placed between a pair of mill-stones!) and seating himself on a half-emptied sack, he vented his grief in inarticulate mutterings. In the meanwhile Giles had descended to the ground story, and opening the sack of flour, turned it out on the floor. Some minute pieces of dirty paper appeared among it, and on stirring it about, several defaced guineas, ground as thin as wafers, were discovered.

Giles felt as much glee as if he had recovered the treasure entire, and cried out to his master to come down, for he had found the money.

Mr. Twink descended with a heavy heart, and looked sorrowfully on the wreck of his property. Then he commenced abusing Giles for an officious meddler, swearing that he had told him not to touch any of the corn he had ground. Words led to words, and in a short time our serving-man, who inherited a little of his mo-

ther's temper, returned some of the compliments which his master so liberally showered upon him. This was adding fuel to fire; and Mr. Twink, forgetting their relative situations, dealt his malapert servant a smart cuff on the face, which Giles returned; and master and man, grasping each other by the throat, tried a fall. Although Giles was the younger man, he had yet a nimble and wiry antagonist, moreover that antagonist was his master, which somewhat cowed his spirit; nevertheless he struggled hard to prevent Mr. Twink getting his head in chancery, and essayed to throw him on the floor. The contest lasted some minutes, when both the combatants, losing their footing, came down together in the midst of the flour which contained the relics of Mr. Twink's cash deposit. Here they floundered for some time, each endeavouring to get uppermost, when, in the midst of the scramble, something darkened the doorway. It was a neighbour of Mr. Twink's. His opportune arrival put an end to the struggle; and master and man, relaxing their hold, and regaining their feet, looked like a couple of white poodle-dogs. Shaking himself, and wiping his

eyes, which were filled with flour, Giles bolted out of the mill, leaving Mr. Twink to relate his misfortune, and the cause of the combat.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

Which treats of the metamorphosis of Giles Chawbacon.

About an hour after Giles's "turn-up" with his master, he was seen to leave the house with a chopfallen air, and with a bundle, which contained all his personal effects. Mr. William Twink had paid him his wages, and ordered him off the premises, threatening, besides, to commence an action against him for assault and battery.

Giles was, as yet, not hackneyed in the ways of the world, and consequently was not callous and insensible to his situation. He quitted the residence of his masters with mortification and regret; for, notwithstanding the parsimonious habits of Mr. William Twink, he had upon the whole been very kindly treated, and, moreover, had always plenty to eat—a consideration of no trifling importance to one whose appetite had often

furnished matter for invective at home. Home was therefore out of the question now. Having strolled into the high road, he sat himself upon a gate, and mused for some time on the mutability of human affairs. While thus occupied, a carter going to Highworth offered him a lift on the way, which he accepted.

Arrived at the town, poor Giles wandered about, scarcely knowing what to do with himself; but, having grown hungry, he repaired to the taproom of an inn, where he regaled himself on bread and cheese and ale. The drink he found so much better than the modest beverage of the Messieurs Twink, that he was induced to call for a little more. That little drop more loosened Giles's tongue, and he began to discourse very much to the edification of those around him. Of course, the whole of his adventures in his recent situation were narrated, with sundry embellishments; and some of his hearers complimented him upon the spirit he had evinced in "showing fight" with Mr. William Twink. At length Giles became very drowsy, and, laying his head on the table, fell fast asleep.

When our countryman awoke, he strolled out

into the street, and seeing a clasp-knife in a cutler's window, he thrust his hand into his breeches' pocket to ascertain the state of his finances, when he discovered to his horror that his pocket had been picked of every farthing it contained! He rushed back to the inn, and made known his loss. Some pitied, others jeered and abused him, and he learnt that two gipsies, who had sat on the same bench, had suddenly left the room while he was sleeping. Giles rushed frantic from the house, cursing his evil stars; and, as he hurried through the market-place, scarcely knowing whither he went, the sound of a drum and fife struck on his ear. A recruiting-serjeant with his party, followed by several young men in smock-frocks, with ribands flying from their hats, came towards him. They halted on seeing Giles, and the sergeant asked him "if he had a mind to serve the King?"

"I dwon't know," replied Giles, with a grin; "may be the King won't ha' m'."

"Oh, yes," said the sergeant; "he wants five thousand fine young fellows like you."

Giles grinned again at this compliment.

"I 've a good mind to 't," said he.

"To be sure you have," rejoined the sergeant. "You'll look so fine in a red coat that your sweetheart won't know you; and who can tell but what you may rise to be a general some day?"

"I 'd toss up vor 't," remarked Giles, "but I ain't got a fardin' left—who'll lend m' a penny?"

"Won't a *shilling* do as well?" asked the sergeant, placing the coin in his hand, and winking to his men.

"Now," cried Giles, unconsciously receiving the King's money, "here gwoes! Yeads I gwoes vor a zowldyer,—, tayls I dwon't!"

He tossed the shilling in the air, and it came down "heads!"

"Bravo!" exclaimed the sergeant. "Good luck always attends a brave man. Come, let's have a quart of ale, and drink success to your new profession.

The drum and fife struck up; and the sergeant, placing himself at the head of the party with the air of a brigadier major, marched off to their quarters.

The next morning Giles, and about a dozen of his fellow clodpoles, with colours flying in their hats, and each with a stick and a bundle,

were marching for the Metropolis. Their subsequent drillings in Bird Cage Walk; their shipment for the Peninsula; and the battles in which they were engaged, form no portion of the present story; but as military men of all ranks now-a-days write their memoirs, we should not marvel to see "The Adventures of Giles Chawbacon in the Peninsula" advertised in the daily papers during the present season.

THE SADDLE.

As Jem Cullum rode home from Swindon Fair, a gipsy woman met him in the way.

"What a pity," said the sybil, "that such a handsome young farmer should be a bachelor."

Jem Cullum was no friend to the gipsy tribe, but this bit of well-timed flattery was too much for his vanity; besides, he wished to learn how the woman came to know that he was a bachelor.

"Coom, coom, none o' yer gammon, missus." said he, laughing. "I ben't a varmer, and I ben't handsome, anyhow."

"I dare say many a young 'oman wishes you warn't," replied the gipsy. "I 'll be bound the squire's daughter don't think you so much amiss, neither, in that red wais'cot. Ah, you may blush, young man; but you were born under a lucky star—ay, a very lucky one, indeed. Cross my hand with a shilling, my handsome master, and I 'll tell ye yer fortune."

"Dald, if that ben't a good un;" cried Jem, thrusting his right hand to the bottom of his breeches pocket, and fishing up a shilling. "But how coomd'e to know as I was a zingle man?"

The gipsy's dark eyes twinkled: she saw that her bait had taken, and that the gull was hooked.

"Oh! it doesn't want a conjurer to tell that," was the reply. "I could see it with half an eye."

"Ah! yer *dogged* 'cute," rejoined the conceited rustic, with a grin. "But coom, here's the money. Now tell m' what good luck's to happen to m'."

He tossed the shilling to the fortune-teller; and stretched out his paw, which she seized and examined with great attention.

"Ah!" cried the dispenser of good luck, "I said so! That line shows you will marry a handsome rich lady, and that tells me you will some day have a pretty round sum left you as a legacy. I told you, you were born to good luck, master.

"Well, may be I be," observed Jem, grinning; "but it 's a long time comin'."

"Wait a bit longer, and you 'll find that I've told you the truth," continued the gipsy.

"Well, well, we zhall zee all about it zome day," cried Jem; and, giving his horse the spur, he jogged on down the road.

Mr. James Cullum was the most conceited sample of mortality in the whole parish. He had learned to read and write at the village school, and, by an occasional visit to the neighbouring town, he had picked up a few words and phrases with which he sometimes "bothered" his neighbours, who thought Jem "a mortal sprack chap;" but in truth he was a great fool, so crammed with vanity, that it eclipsed the little sense he originally possessed.

Jem followed the noble profession of a farrier and horse-doctor, and sometimes added to his gains by dealing in horses or pigs, or any kind of live stock by which a trifle might be made. As he rode home, he pondered on the words of the gipsy women, which, albeit he had grinned when they were uttered, made a deep impression on his vanity.

"What," thought he, "if I was to become a rich man, and live in a girt house, and ha'

zarvants o' me own! Many mwore unlikely thengs than *that*. Poor people *may* become rich uns; and when people be rich, everybody looks up to 'em. That Miss Rosa—her 's a very nice body, and mortal good-natured. A ain't got a bit o' pride—noa, not a mossel."

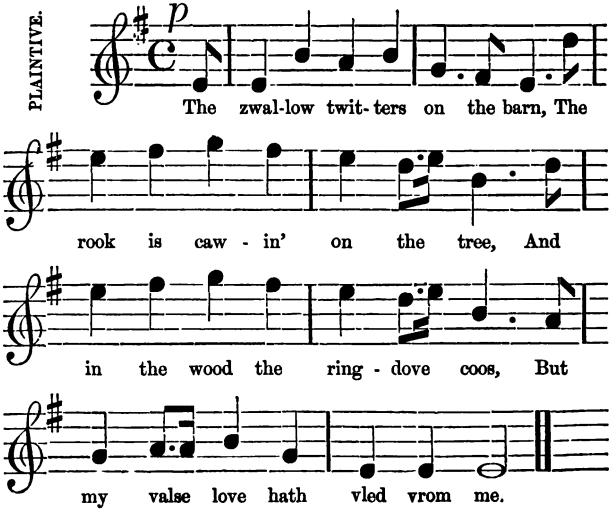
Here his reverie was disturbed by a violent shock, which nearly sent him over the head of his steed. So completely was his mind occupied by the bright visions which the fortune-teller had conjured up, that he did not perceive the turnpike gate was shut, and accordingly rode plump upon it, which caused the "'pike-man" to utter an extemporary benediction upon his carelessness.

Mr. Cullum's *chateaux en Espagne* occupied him too much to permit him to return the greeting of the 'pike-man, and he went on his way still musing.

"My owld uncle," thought he, "ain't made up 's mind to die 'et;—but a med as well, vor what use a 's on. I wonders what th' owld bwoy 'll leave I? I dare zay Jack Smith thenks *he 'll* go snacks in 't. A 's allus carneyin' ov un, and takin' th' owld chap presents—vust

one theng, then 'nother; but 'twon't do, I kneows. Master Pearce be a rummish customer, and old birds ben't cot wi' chaff.

As he passed the end of a green lane, Jem Cullum heard a human voice carolling at its highest pitch a favourite song of the district. The singer was mounted on a little rough-coated pony, and Jem perceived that it was a lad who lived in the village. But we must give our readers a sample of this ditty.



II.

Like tiny pipe of whaten straw,
The wren his leetle note doth zwell,
And every livin' theng that vlies,
Ov his true love doth vondly tell.

III.

But I alowne am left to pine,
And zet beneath th' withy tree;
For truth and honesty be gone,
And my valse love hath vled from me!

"What a martal doleful strain th' be'st a zengin', Joe," observed Cullum, as the vocalist emerged from the lane, and joined him. "What, ain't Zally good-natured, eh?"

"Oh, I l'arned thuck zong at Highworth last Lammas," replied Joe, grinning, "and I zengs un to plaze mezelf."

"And th' mak'st a noise like a dumbledore in a pitcher," remarked Cullum. "Plague take all zengin' and music, I zay. The best music in the world's two vlails and a cuckoo!"

Ah! that's your way o' thenkin'," rejoined Joe. "I likes a good ballet, 'specially when a body's got zummut to whet's whistle the while. That's a sprack mare o' yourn, Maester Cullum."

"I b'lieves a is," said the farrier, urging his steed to a full trot. "Come along."

The conſabulation ceased for a time, and the two worthies soon entered the village, when the first news that reached the ears of Cullum was the serious illness of his uncle, who had suddenly dropped down in a fit while conversing at his own door with a neighbour.

"Ah!" thought he, "the gipsy wasn't much out!"

Having put up his steed, Cullum repaired to the humble dwelling of his dying relative, to whom he was next of kin.

About an hour afterwards Jem Cullum was seen coming up the village, with a visage anything but expressive of good temper. Old Pearce had yielded his last breath surrounded by a few friends and relatives, to whom, being speechless, he had made several little presents. When pressed upon the subject of his *will*, the old man shook his head in token that he had not made one; and young Jack Smith found that his attentions during the last ten years had been thrown away, for Jem Cullum was heir to

all. This all, however, comprised very little; and when the remains of Master Pearce were consigned to the grave, Jem began to pry into every hole and corner of the house for the "owld stocking," in which his uncle was supposed to have secreted his savings. Disappointment, however, attended his researches; he only found such personal effects as belonged to an old bachelor of very humble means, whose income was derived from a small annuity settled upon him by a gentleman to whom he had once been groom.

Among a number of odd things in a closet was an old saddle, which Jem took home to his own house, thinking it might save his own if a neighbour wanted to borrow. It was a very antiquated affair, out of repair, and not worth half-a-crown; but, as Jem observed, "it would do to lend, and would save t' other;" so he kept it, not out of respect to the memory of his deceased uncle, but for economy,—a matter to which Jem had, from his youth upward, a careful eye. He was a saving lad, both by nature and habit, and could drive a bargain with any man for twenty

miles round; in fact, under an apparently stupid and clownish demeanour, he masked a good deal of the cunning usually found in such characters.* When lately at Swindon Fair, he met with a horse-dealer who took a fancy to his mare; but the man would not give enough by several pounds, and so they parted without coming to a bargain.

Some time after, Jem Cullum went to Burford

* An old London trader was wont to say, that if a Yorkshire bagman ever called upon him, he invariably buttoned up his breeches pocket, and inwardly swore to have no dealings with him. Not so with those from the west of England; for sometimes he trusted to their representations, but found, at length, that the West-countrymen, by their affectation of simplicity, had, as sailors say, "got the weather-gauge" of him completely. We were once told a story of the meeting of a couple of horse-dealers, one a Yorkshireman and the other a Bristolian, at a town in Hampshire. Both had faulty horses, and they mutually resolved to cheat each other. After some haggling, the Yorkshireman exchanged his beast with the West-countryman, giving him five guineas besides. As soon as the bargain was struck, and the money paid, the Yorkshireman exclaimed, "Ha! I've doon thee, lad; the poor beast is damnably spavined!"—"He! he! he!" chuckled the Bristolian, "that 's very odd; but do you know, that when I looked into my hoss's mouth this morning, I *vound his tongue a hanging by a vibre!*"

Fair upon the same mare, when he met with the aforesaid "dealer."

"Well," said the would-be buyer, "you have n't sold your mare yet? I suppose you 've come down a bit in price by this time?"

"Noa, I ain't," replied Jem.

"Well, what *will* ye take now?

"Just what I axed vor her avore."

"That 's a good deal too much; but the creter looks a good un."

"A *is* a good un," replied Jem, patting the neck of the animal,—"as good a bit o' hoss-vlesh as a body can put's two legs acrass."

"Ay, ay, that 's what every seller says."

"That 's what *I* says," observed Cullum; "and I won't take a varden less vor her iv I kneows it."

"Well, if you won't, you won't," replied the man; "and so I suppose I must have her at your price—saddle and all?" he added, with a grin at the quaint-looking object."

"Oh, noa, noa! I wants he at whoame," said Jem; "can't zell 'e he, no how!"

"Well, well, tak 't off, and just tie her on to that string of hosses," rejoined the dealer; "and

while I go and get chainge for a pound-bill at the bank, you go and order a couple glasses of licker at the inn. I'll be with 'e in five minutes."

"What 'll 'e ha'?" asked Jem, calling after him.

"Cold without," bawled the dealer.

Cullum entered the inn, and calling for the liquor, observed that the gen'elman would be there in a minute, and pay for the two glasses.

"Oh, very well, sir," said the waiter, looking well at the features and dress of his customer, for he had been bilked once or twice, and had read of the exploits of Dando in the London newspapers.

Jem Cullum sipped his liquor, and looked around him. He read all the notifications hung up in the room, and began to spell the contents of a county paper more than a week old. He then looked at the clock; more than half an hour had passed away, and the horse-dealer did not come.

"Martal strainge," muttered Jem. "I' ll gwo and zee what 's become ov un."

With these words he walked to the door, but no dealer was to be seen; and, looking still

further, he perceived that his mare was not among the other horses, on a string a short distance off. Upon inquiry, nobody appeared to know the man with whom he had been dealing: and he learnt to his dismay that the string of horses did not belong to him;—he had only used them as a post for a few minutes, in order to lull suspicion in Jem's mind.

In the midst of the wonderment which ensued, a little boy in a smockfrock came up.

"Was thuck mare your'n, zur?" asked the urchin.

"Eez, to be zhure a was," replied Jem, eagerly,— "where is a?"

"Oh, hur 's a longish way off by this time," said the boy, "vor I zeed a man gallop out o' th' town 'pon her, pretty nigh ha'f an hour zence."

"The devil thee didst!" groaned Jem.

The novelist of some thirty years since would here diaper the page with stars, and leave the reader to picture himself the distress of the plundered clodpole,—but this retreat is denied to us. Jem Cullum roared like a madman; he by turns cursed the fellow who had plundered

him, and called upon the bystanders to go in pursuit of the thief, promising them the most extravagant rewards in the event of their capturing him. Some pitied, others derided the poor farrier, while the more humane advised him to go home, and draw up a hand-bill describing his mare, and offering a sum of money to those who could give information respecting her.

Jem considered this advice deserving attention, and strapping the saddle on his own back, trudged homeward, with a heavy heart. As he entered the village, a crowd of children came around, and began to stare at the man who had put the saddle on his own back; the very dogs joining in the outcry of old and young at his strange equipment.

The next day, Jem Cullum borrowed a horse of a neighbour, and rode many miles in search of his lost mare, but his inquiries were fruitless, and he was compelled to give up all thoughts of regaining her, for not a creature did he meet who could give any account of the thief,—the mare was irrecoverably lost,—"clean gone," as he expressed it, "like old Molly Little's eyezight!"

About a week afterwards, Jem Cullum was

aroused from his midnight slumbers by a noise below-stairs. Something was stirring in the kitchen; Jem felt nervous, held his breath, and listened.

"Ha!" thought he, "perhaps it's the rascal who stole my mare, come to zee what else a can rob m' ov. I'll bide still. A won't vind much down stairs."

As this passed in his mind, there was a loud noise below, like the breaking open a cupboard or a chest of drawers: the thief, it was plain, had made up his mind to ferret out every hole and corner. Jem felt the perspiration start from every pore. What if the plunderer should finish the night's work by coming up stairs and cutting his throat? The thought was horrible; escape was impossible, and he might be murdered in his bed, without his old deaf servant hearing of it until the morning.

While he lay in this horrible suspense, Jem thought he heard the thieves leaving the house: he held in his breath, and listened. They were certainly quitting the kitchen; but then, the noise among the poultry, of which he kept a considerable number, plainly told that they were determined to levy a tax on his live-stock:

several hens uttered stifled noises, as if choking, and a duck's breath seemed to depart all at once, in a smothered "quaaaa-ack."

"The wosbirds!" thought Jem, "they'll not leave a vowl in the yard!"

At length the noises subsided, and all was silent as the grave. Jem lay counting the hours, and praying for morning dawn. Morning at length came, and then Mr. Cullum crept from his pallet, scratched his head, yawned, and looking out of the window, took a survey of the premises ere he ventured to descend.

Having satisfied himself that the coast was clear, Jem proceeded to call up the aged creature who performed for him the joint duties of housekeeper, cook, and maid of all work, and then master and servant proceeded down stairs to reconnoitre.

The farrier's sad forebodings were realised; the kitchen and outhouses were stripped of everything portable, and chanticleer came strutting up to him, without a single mate, the skeleton of the poultry-yard!

Among other things, the thieves had taken

away the old saddle, along with a better one: not an article above the value of threepence had been left in the place!

This cruel plundering nearly drove Jem mad. He was heard at times to deal in vague surmises as to the honesty of his neighbours, some of whom he suspected had paid him the nocturnal visit. Then he cursed the gipsy woman, who had assured him of good fortune, and swore he would bring her before the justices, let him meet her when he would. But nobody cared for his surmises, or his threats, and few pitied him, for he was always looked upon as a greedy, selfish fellow.

A fews days afterwards, while Jem Cullum was at the neighbourhing town, a parcel was delivered at his house by the carrier. On reaching home, Jem was informed of its arrival, when he eagerly set to work to open it. It was carefully made up in a piece of old sacking, and cutting open the seams, he discovered, to his great astonishment, that it contained the *old saddle!*

"Dald if it be n't th' owld zaddle agen!" exclaimed he. "Luk 'e here, Patty."

"Massey upon uz!" cried the old woman, lifting up her eyes, "zo it be!"

"And cut all to pieces!" continued Jem, pulling off its covering; "how cussed spiteful ov 'em! Hallo! here's a letter."

Sure enough a letter was inside. We give it *verbatim et literatim:*

"*Mester Cullum*

"*i sends you back your saddell koz its sutch a cusnashun rum looking hudmedud of a theng that pipl woll no it direckly them dux o yourn warnt so bad butt the fouls was dam skinney i hopes nother time theal bee fater so no moor at preasent from your frends.*"

Jem Cullum, as he finished reading this elegant epistle, swore an oath which would sadly grate on ears polite.

"I wishes the ducks was in their gutses," added he, "veathers and all!"

Old Patty was too deaf to hear this benediction, but she saw her master's perturbed countenance, and muttered, "Zo they be, Maester Cullum; they 'd rob a church."

Jem Cullum continued to mutter curses upon his tormentors as he beheld how the saddle had been cut all to pieces by the thieves who had despoiled him.

"It' s aggrivation," said he, "the malicious wosbirds! how 'll they zar' m' next? Anyhow, the leather 'll be useful," and he tore off a piece as he spoke, when out tumbled a piece of dirty paper.

"What's that?" thought Jem, picking up the paper and unfolding it; "I 'm blest iv 'taint pound bills! hurror! hurror! Luk 'e here, Patty! here's owld uncle's zavins bank! hurror!"

With these words he commenced capering about the kitchen with the notes in each hand, to the wonderment of old Patty, who thought him quite bereft of his wits.

"Hurror!" cried Jem again; "this 'll make up for the mare and the vowls too! *The gipsy's right after all!* I 'll go to church next Zunday, and zet just avore Miss Rosa, that I woll."

JONAS GRUBB'S COURTSHIP.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

In which Jonas is discovered under the influence of the green-eyed monster.

"Oh, lar', Molly! I thenks on 'e all day long, and drames on 'e o' nights! When wool 'e zay eez, and put m' out o' me mizery, Molly? Them eyes o' yourn be as black as slans, and warn't made to luk zo scarnvul."

This tender appeal was addressed by Jonas Grubb to his master's plump, rosy-cheeked, and black-eyed maid-servant, as he came into the kitchen to breakfast.

Molly appeared to be too much engaged in preparing the morning-meal to pay any attention to her lover, who continued to plead his cause.

"Ah! Molly," said he, "ye purtends to be as dunch as a bittle, but I kneows 'e hears ev'ry

word I zays. How can 'e gwo on zo—it 's agrivation, I tell 'e."

"Lar' a massey! what a caddle th' bist a makin', Jonas," said the damsel, turning sharply round; "th' bist out o' thee wits!"

"Ah! to be zhure I be; and who made m' zo, Molly?" was Jonas's rejoinder.

"Lar'! Maester Grub," cried the girl; "how should *I* kneow."

"Why, it 's theezelf, thee ownzelf, Molly," continued her lover. "Do 'e take pity on m', and let 's be married at Whitzuntide."

"He! he! he!" laughed Molly. "I ain't *thought* o' such a theng, Jonas."

"Coom, coom, then, *begin* to think on 't, Molly."

"Time enuf vor that, Jonas."

"No, there ain't."

"Eez, there be."

"No, there ain't, I tell 'e; dwon't tarment a body zo."

"*I* dwon't tarment th'."

"Eez, but 'e dwoes, Molly," said the love-sick clodpole, taking her by the hand; "them lips o' your'n was made vor kissin'."

And suiting the action to the word, he endeavoured to convince her that he was in earnest; her chubby cheek received the salute, while, endeavouring to free herself from his grasp, she cried, half laughing, half angry,—

"Ha' done, Jonas! Dwon't 'e be a cussnation vool! I 'll call missus!

"Noa, noa, I zha'n't: I dwon't mind vor nobody," continued Jonas, still struggling with the coy Abigail. "I won't ha' done vor King Gearge his zelf."

"Leave m' 'lone y' great gawney! cried the girl; "here's zomebody comin'."

At that moment a loud "Haw! haw!" was heard outside, and Jonas, relinquishing his grasp, turned, and saw the grinning countenance of his fellow-servant, George Gabbett, looking in at the casement, his eyes dilated to their fullest extent, and his enormous mouth stretching from ear to ear.

"What! I 've cot 'e, have I!" cried George, as he entered the kitchen: "pretty gwoin's on, I thenks—what 'll our missus zay to 't."

Molly hung down her head, and Jonas, affecting indifference, pretended to be amused with

something which he saw from the window. When, however, he turned his head, he perceived that something had passed between George and Molly, *sotto voce,* for the girl blushed scarlet, and George began to whistle a tune, with a view to lull suspicion.

Jonas felt that he was a miserable clodpole, and that his worst fears were realised. He beheld in the awkward goggle-eyed, and huge mouthed George Gabbett, a *rival,*—he was quite sure of it, and his heart sunk within him at the thought. What *could* she see in George to prefer before him? He was not ill-looking, while his fellow-servant was a perfect fright.

Certes, there was nothing prepossessing in the *looks* of George Gabbett; but, like many other ugly fellows, Nature had given him "a tongue that might wheedle the devil," and he had, ere the morning in question, made good use of it, to the prejudice of Jonas and the advancement of his own suit.

It is very true that Molly had often compared the looks of her two swains, and had really thought Jonas a good-looking young fellow, and a good-natured one to boot; but, whenever

her heart was inclined towards her more comely lover, the eloquent persuasion of George Gabbett put him entirely out of her head for a time.

Jonas felt much annoyed at the rude interruption he had just experienced, but he considered it politic to dissemble; so, having mused awhile as he looked out of the window, he turned, and entered into conversation with George, who had already laid siege to the bread and bacon, while Molly had gone to fetch a mug of beer.

"Bist a gwoin' to th' vair next week, Gearge?" he inquired.

"Ah, that I be," said the rustic Thersites, with a provoking smile, which distorted his huge mouth amazingly; "and Molly's gwoin' wi' m'."

"No I 'll be drattled if her is!" cried Jonas indignantly.

"Hollo! what 'st *thee* got to do wi' 't?" said Gabbett: "her won't ask *thy* leave, I 'm zhure."

"Eez, her wool."

"Noa, her won't."

"But I kneows her won't gwo with 'e! cried Jonas, waxing warm.

"Well, wayt a bit, and zee if her dwon't."

"I shan't wayt vor zuch a vool as thee," said Jonas, losing his temper.

"Haw! haw!" laughed the other. "*He's the vool as loses!*"

This provoking reply stung Jonas to the quick: he felt as if he could have destroyed his rival at a single blow.

"'Od drattle thee body!" he cried, bursting with rage; "dost thee suppwose any wench 'll ever luk at *thy* ugly veace?"

George Gabbett laughed at this demonstration until he was in danger of choaking, for he had continued to demolish the bread and bacon, without being put out of his way by Jonas's jealous fit. But when he found that his fellow-servant had worked himself up into a passion, he lost all command of himself, and roared like a bull-calf with very glee.

"What bist a lafin' at, y' ugly wosbird!" said Jonas, trembling with choler; and, striding up to Gabbett, he knocked the huge lumps of

bread and bacon out of his horny fist to the other end of the kitchen.

This was too much. Gabbett jumped up, and, with an oath, threw himself into the most approved boxing attitude, calling upon Jonas to "Come on, and vight it owt like a man;" but the cause of the threatened combat now re-entered the kitchen with the mug of beer. Stepping between her lovers, she entreated them to desist.

"Do 'e zet down, Gearge!—zet down, Jonas," said Molly, alarmed at the fierce looks of the belligerents; "*pray* do 'e leave off this, or I 'll gwo and drow m' zelf in th' 'os-pond as zhure 's vate." And having uttered this pathetic appeal, she raised the corner of her apron to her eyes.

"Dwon't 'e fret, Molly," said Jonas, sitting down. "I won't touch un."

"Thed 'st better not," observed George Gabbett, as he went in search of his stray bread and bacon, which, however, the old house-dog had quietly devoured during the fray. "If th' put'st a vinger on m', I 'll knock thee yead off."

"Be quiet, Gearge—be quiet," said Molly.

"If 'e dwon't be quiet, I 'll gwo and pack up my thengs, and leave *di*rectly."

"What did a knock my vittels out o' m' hand, then, vor?" growled Gabbett, taking his seat, and helping himself to an enormous piece of bread, upon which he placed a thick slice of bacon, and then a smaller piece of the former, on which to rest his thumb while he divided the mass with his clasp-knife.

Jonas also began to help himself, though his appetite had been blunted a little by what had passed, and their meal was discussed in silence, with an occasional interchange of black looks, for neither party appeared desirous of renewing the conversation.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

Which shows that even personal ugliness may occasionally be turned to some account.

"HAW! haw! haw! haw!"

"He! he! he! he!"

"Oh Lar'! only luk at *that!* Did 'e ever zee zuch a veace in all yer life?"

"Lar' a' massey! I howpes as how there 's no married 'ooman here to-day! Haw! haw! haw! I shall zartinly die o' lafin'."

Such were the exclamations which came from a crowd of men, women, and boys, assembled round a stage, upon which two rustics were grinning through horse-collars. The various attractions of the fair were neglected for a while, and even the grimaces of "Joey" on the adjoining stage gave place to the wonderful contortions of the human face divine exhibited by the two clodpoles, who were certainly striving their utmost to show how far Nature's lines might be perverted.

"Grin away, Tom!" cried a fellow in the crowd. "Grin away, m' bwoy. Thee 'lt get th' hat, I 'm zartin zhure."

"Two to one on Jim," roared another; "he 'd grin a hosse's yead off."

"They 're a couple o' th' ugliest wosbirds in the vair," cried a third; "'e wunt vind zuch a pair as they in a hurry, I 'll be bound."

Among the crowd was Jonas Grubb, and his fellow-servant, George Gabbett, who had adjusted their differences, and come to indulge in

the humours of the fair. Gabbett was looking earnestly at the grinning contest, and, having observed it for some time in silence, he turned to his companion.

"Jonas," said he, "I thenks *I* could do that as well as they."

"Thee bist a queer quist,"* remarked Jonas sarcastically; "I wonder th' doesn't try 't."

"Dald if I dwon't," cried Gabbett; "bide a bit till they chaps ha' done."

In a few minutes the umpires decided in favour of one of the grinners, who was therefore declared the victor, if no other competitor

* "Thee bist a queer quist, or quest."—This phrase, so common in the north of Wiltshire, is popularly believed to have had its origin in the following story. A simple, half-witted country fellow once went a bird's-nesting, and, having scrambled to the top of a pollard-oak, in the hope of finding the nest of a wood-pigeon, or wood-quest, he beheld therein a nest of young owls, certainly the oddest-looking creatures of the feathered tribe when young. The nestlings, perceiving the large goggle-eyes of the intruder looking down upon them, greeted him with a simultaneous hiss of indignant disapprobation; whereupon the clown drew back, and exclaimed as he looked upon the foremost, who manifested a disposition to resent this invasion of their abode,—"*Thee bist a queer quest!*"

appeared; but he enjoyed his honours for a short time only, and when George Gabbett mounted the stage, there was a sort of anticipatory laugh among the crowd, who made sure that he would bear off the prize.

"What 'st thenk ov *he*, naybour?" cried an old man, pointing to the new candidate. "What 'st thenk ov thuck ard'nary wosbird? A 's enuf to vrighten the owld un."

"I zhuodn't like to vind un in bacon vor a month," said another. "What a mouth a 's got, to be zhure!"

"What a yead!" cried a third.

"What a knock-kneed zon of a——!" remarked an old man. "I wonders how zuch a pair o' legs can stand under zuch a yead and zhowlders as hisn."

"Howld yer tongues," cried a woman in the crowd; "you 'll put the young man out o' countenance, if 'e gwoes on zo."

All these remarks were very gratifying to Jonas Grubb, who wished that Molly had been there to hear them.

"The people be quite right," thought he; "a *is* a ugly twoad as a body may zee in a day's journey.

Meanwhile Gabbet had taken up the horse-collar, and thrust his head through it. The effect was irresistible; nothing was ever seen before so ludicrously ugly. The men roared with delight, and the women laughed till they held their sides, while the boys, an octave or two higher, joined in the general chorus. George Gabbet grinned with exultation, while the hitherto successful candidate looked glum, and seemed half inclined to abuse him for possessing so much ugliness.

"Give un the hat!" cried a dozen voices. "Ye 'll never zee his fellow if we stands here till doomsday!"

Gabbet here turned and made his obeisance to the spectators with an awkward bow, which he intended to be as much as possible like that of the favourite candidate at the late election. They acknowledged it with shouts of riotous laughter. Jonas wished his fellow-servant at Jericho.

The new hat was now taken from the pole on which it was set at the end of the stage and presented to Gabbett, who appeared absolutely crazed by his success. He seized the prize with one hand, and with the other tossed his old hat

among the crowd. Wiser heads than his have rejected the maxim of the Roman poet, and neglected to shorten sail when too much swelled by the breeze of prosperity. As he descended the stage, a crowd of loose fellows pressed around, and asked him to treat them. He was too much elated to heed the remonstrances of Jonas, who thereupon left him to his fate.

The successful grinner was hurried to an ale-house amid ironical cries of triumph, which the conceited clown considered genuine manifestations of admiration.

"Why· you looks as vierce as Thomas o' Warminster,"* said a sinister-visaged fellow,

* Poor Thomas o' Warminster was another half-witted clodpole, who, being at a neighbouring town, purchased a new hat, and was so delighted with his acquisition, that in the pride of his heart he resolved to treat himself with an extra quart, which had the effect of adumbrating the little sense he possessed. His road home at night lay through a wood, in which he soon lost himself, when he began to bawl out aloud for help, crying with stentorian lungs, "A man lost! a man lost!" The owls had taken up their evening song, and between the pauses of the rustic's shouts he plainly heard their prolonged "who-o-o!" — "Poor Thomas o' Warminster," replied he. "Who-o-o-o-o!" continued the owls, while he of Warminster repeated his answer; till at

eyeing his new hat, and keeping close to his side. "We must have a quart on the strength on 't."

"Ah! that us woll—two or dree quarts!" cried the elated chop-stick. "I 've got a pound bill, and I meawns to spend un afore I gwoes whoam! Here, landlord! bring us a quart o' zixpenny!"

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

In which Thersites enacts Apollo, and in which one of the lost fables of Æsop is discovered.

GEORGE GABBETT found no difficulty in obtaining plenty of people to drink to his success, and at his expense. The "pound bill" had been changed, and was disappearing as fast as the beer it purchased; for the working classes in town and country are wonderful proficients in

length waxing warm with the supposed authors of the interrogatories, who, he imagined, by the provoking iteration were making merry at his expense, he wrathfully roared out, "*Poor Thomas o' Warminster, I tell ye,—and a vire new hat!*"

such feats;* and there were no temperance societies and no Father Matthews in those days. The human sponges stuck to their entertainer, and appeared willing to *drink*, as long as *he paid*; while Gabbett himself, wrapt in an atmosphere of beer and tobacco smoke, was the presiding deity of the place. Songs, horse-laughter, and coarse jests resounded from upwards of a score of throats, and at length the bemused clodpole was asked to favour the company with a stave.

"Gen'elmen," said he, pressing down the ashes of his pipe, and spitting through his teeth,—"gen'elmen, I bean't much ov a zenger; but when I 'm in company, I allus does m'

* A story is told of a couple of fellows who once stole a barrel of beer from a stage-waggon. Having got it home, with the usual recklessness of the dishonest, they held a council with others of the same stamp how they might consume it. First one, then another hard drinker was named, as persons likely to render efficient service in despatching the contents of the barrel, which was then to be burnt, in order that the robbery might not be traced. "Let 's ask owld Tom," said one of the worthies. "Oh, noa," cried another, "it's o' no use a vetchin' *he*,—he can't drink no mwore nor dree gallons wi'out gettin' drunk!"

best,—coz a body ough'n't to ax other people to do that as they dwon't like to do theirzelves"—(hiccup).

"Hurror!" cried the company, hammering the tables lustily, and stamping with their feet, in token of approval, "a zong! a zong!"

"Here gwoes, then," said Gabbett, and forthwith he commenced singing, in a voice which might have been heard all over the fair:—

THE HARNET AND THE BITTLE.

A Harnet zet in a hollow tree,—
A proper spiteful twoad was he,—
And a merrily zung while a did zet,
His stinge as zharp as a baganet,
"Oh, who 's zo bowld and vierce as I,—
I vears not bee, nor wapse, nor vly?"

Chorus—Oh, who 's zo bowld, &c.

A Bittle up thuck tree did clim',
And scarnvully did luk at him,
Zays he, "Zur Harnet, who giv' thee
A right to zet in thuck there tree?
Although you zengs so nation vine,
I tell 'e it 's a house o' mine."

Chorus—Although you zengs, &c.

The Harnet's conscience velt a twinge,
But growin' bowld wi' his long stinge,
Zays he, "Possession 's the best law,
Zo here th' shasn't put a claw.
Be off, and leave the tree to me:
The Mixen's good enough vor thee!"

Chorus—Be off, and leave, &c.

Just then a Yuccle passin' by,
Was axed by them their cause to try.
"Ha! ha! it 's very plain," zays he,
"They 'll make a vamous nunch for me'!"
His bill was zharp, his stomack lear,
Zo up a snapped the caddlin pair.

Chorus—His bill was zharp, &c.

MORAL.

All you as be to law inclined,
This leetle story bear in mind;
For if to law you ever gwo.
You 'll vind they 'll allus zarve 'e zo;
You 'll meet the vate o' these 'ere two:
They 'll take your cwoat and carcass too!

Chorus—You 'll meet the vate, &c.

There was a tremendous roar of approbation at the conclusion of this elegant ditty, and George Gabbett grinned like an ape with excess

of self-conceit. The liquor was beginning to fuddle both him and those he was entertaining.

In the mean time Jonas had made the round of the fair, and seen all that was worth seeing, including giants and giantesses, dwarfs, fire-eaters, and fire-vomiters, with a host of other intellectual sights, too numerous to be recorded here. Evening was now coming on, and Jonas supposing his fellow-servant well occupied, determined to steal home and have a *tête-à-tête* with Molly. He accordingly proceeded down a by-street, intending to reach the outskirts of the town, when, lo! he came plump upon George Gabbett, reeling drunk, between two of the lowest women of the place. His hat, the *new* hat, which he had so successfully grinned for, was gone, and that which now graced his head was of the kind which modern Cockneys designate "shocking bad." No doubt some of the worthies he had been entertaining had lent him that to reel about in, while the new one was taken care of till his return!

"Ha! Jonas!" stuttered the drunkard, "glad y' 've coom, m' bwoy! What 'll 'e ha' to drenk, eh?"

"Nothin'," replied Jonas. "I be gwoin' whoame."

"Well, bide a bit, and ha' a drop o' zummut."

"Noa, I zhan't ha' no mwore to-day, iv I kneows it."

"Od drattle th'!" cried Gabbett, disengaging himself from his companions, and putting himself in a boxing attitude, "if 'e won't drenk, wull 'e vight?"

"No, I won't do that nayther," said Jonas, trying to avoid him, when Gabbett raised his hand and struck a blow at him, which missed its aim, and the striker overbalancing himself, fell flat on his face. Jonas thought this a good opportunity to beat a retreat, and taking to his heels, was soon out of the reach of his quarrelsome fellow-servant.

Having reached home, he found out Molly, and related to her in glowing colours George Gabbett's adventures at the fair, and the reader may be sure the description was "illustrated with cuts." The effect was just such as he wished and expected. Molly determined to renounce her profligate lover, and cleave to the

more orderly one;—in a word, she made up her mind from that hour to marry Jonas.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

"Needles and pins, needles and pins,
When a man marries his trouble begins."
Domestic Anthology.

About a fortnight after the scene described in the preceding chapter, the curate of Cricklade announced to the congregation "the banns of marriage between Jonas Grubb and Mary Little," and these parties being "out axed," they were duly made man and wife, to the great chagrin of Mr. Gabbett, who wondered what Molly could see in such a fellow as Jonas.

About nine months afterwards, Jonas, who had been retained on the same farm as an out-door servant, was one morning missed by his fellow-labourers, who observed that he did not come to work so early as usual. Breakfast time arrived, but no Jonas; and they had just finished their meal, and were preparing to return to work, when one of them discovered him approaching

with an unusual air of dejection. It was a bitter cold winter morning, the snow covered the ground, and poor Grubb looked like a locomotive icicle. As he approached, various conjectures were hazarded as to the cause of his absence. At length he arrived among them, looking care-worn and woe-begone.

"Ha! Jonas," cried half a dozen voices, "what 's the matter? What makes 'e zo late? How 's missus?"

To this string of interrogatories Jonas replied, "Ho, her 's better *now*."

"Better! What, is her put to bed, then?" was the rejoinder.

"Eez."

"Ha! what 's a got?—a bwoy or a girl?

"Neither."

"Ha, what!—neither a bwoy nor a girl! Has a got nothin'?

"Oh, eez," replied Jonas, with a rueful expression of countenance, "a 's got zummut wi' a vengeance."

"Well, what *is* it, Jonas?—what is it, Jonas Grubb?"

"*Twins!*" said Jonas mournfully.

There was a burst of horse laughter at this announcement. Some began to condole with poor Grubb, others to banter him; but George Gabbett, who was among them, said not a word, though it was apparent that he enjoyed Jonas's tribulation.

At length the men separated, and proceeded in different directions to their work. They had just cleared the court-yard, when Gabbett, looking over his shoulder at Jonas, who had remained behind, roared out,—

"Ah, Jonas! it 's a sharpish winter this; but it zeems *it ain't killed all the Grubbs!*"

THE BLACK RAM.

"THOMAS," said Mistress Large to her loving spouse, "do 'e go into the garden and cut us a cabbage. We 've got the pot on to-day."

Master Large stood not on the order of his going, but trudged off at once to the kitchen-garden without saying a word. Having selected two or three of the finest cabbages, he drew forth his clasp-knife, and was about to sever them from their stalks, when the voice of a boy arrested his attention, and suspended the operation.

"Maester," said the child, "wull 'e let m' chainge hats wi' thuck galley-crow yander?"

The worthy farmer looked up, and saw the boy pointing to a scare-crow at the other end of the garden.

"Who bist thee?" he inquired.

The boy stared stupidly, and blushed until

his sun-burnt and freckled face looked several shades darker.

"What 's thee name, mun?" said the farmer.

"Pinneger, maester," replied the boy.

"Pinneger! What, bist thee a Pinneger? How many 's thee mother got at whome?"—

"Zeven, maester."

"Zeven!"—

"Eez."

"Massey upon us!" exclaimed the farmer, compassionately; "what a pretty pack on 'e! Here, come along wi' me, and we 'll zee what we can vind th'."

The child required no second bidding, but followed the farmer to the dairy door, where a hunk of bread and cheese was placed in his hand. The poor little creature began to eat voraciously, for he had but a scanty breakfast that morning. The farmer and his wife looked on with great satisfaction.

"Well," said he, "woot like anything else?

"Eez," replied the boy, grinning.

"Ha! what?—"A drap o' drink, maester."

"Well, th' sha't ha' 't. Here, dame, gwo an draw 'n a leetle drap."

Little Jack Pinneger had fallen into good hands: the farmer and his wife were two creatures of most benevolent disposition. Theirs was a house from which the hungry and needy never went empty away, at which no beggar ever asked in vain; and it may be safely averred, that more charity was dispensed from their hospitable door than from any rich man's in the country. Master Large and his kind-hearted wife had never been blessed with offspring, but they were seldom without some relative's child, and, being of easy and yielding dispositions, they were sponged upon on every occasion. It happened that they had a nephew's boy staying with them at this time, and some of his cast-off clothes were luckily of a size that exactly fitted little Jack Pinneger, who marched off in his new rigging, delighted with his good luck. It may be readily imagined that, after this kind reception, Jack Pinneger often found his way to the house where he had been so well treated. He was a tall child for his age, but by no means a bright one, as will hereafter be shown. In the following year, Farmer Large thought of trying him as a bird-keeper, and accordingly set him

to watch some peas. Jack was greatly elated at this appointment; for two or three days previous to entering upon his office he could talk of nothing else among his playfellows in the village. At length he was led to the ground by the honest farmer, and told to "watch" it carefully.

Jack Pinneger did watch. He watched, and saw that a multitude of almost every denomination came to devour the farmer's peas: house-sparrows and hedge-sparrows, linnets, redstarts, tomtits, and the whole of the tribe of finches, battened on the crop uninterrupted, while the "watcher" lay under the hedge out of the hot sun, and amused himself by stripping the green bark off the stick which he had cut with his pocket-knife.

Jack marched home in the evening, delighted with his job, which he thought a very easy one. In the morning he was up and off to the field again; but he found the birds were up before him, and were eating away as if they had had nothing the previous day; in fact, by the evening, they had nearly rendered a bird-keeper needless. The watcher was just about go home, when he espied his employer approaching.

As the farmer entered the ground, he saw, to his great consternation, a very cloud of birds rise from his crop, and he involuntarily uttered a malediction on the boy, who now came running towards him.

"Maester," said Jack, "where be I to drive they birds to next? They've yeat up all them peazen!"

The worthy farmer made no reply, but darting on the boy a look of terrible import, rushed to the hedge to procure a twig wherewith to administer a little wholesome correction to his unworthy servant. Jack took the hint and bolted. Pursuit was out of the question: the farmer was a fat pursy man, and the boy was fleet of foot.

"Stop un! stop un!" roared Farmer Large to some of his men, two fields off: but Jack, hearing the hue and cry, instantly made a *détour*, and was soon out of sight.

When the farmer's indignation had a little subsided, he could not refrain from laughing at the really ridiculous affair; but had his bird-keeper come in his way at the time, it is very likely he would have given him reason to repent it. In

the mean time, Jack was bantered unmercifully by his playmates in the village; and, "Plaze maester, where be I to drive they birds to next?" was often asked of him by the farmer's men when they met. But the bird-keeping story, after a time, gave place to some other piecè of tom-foolery, and Jack was teazed no longer. He grew amazingly, and Pinneger, senior, a year or two after, found little difficulty in persuading the farmer "to try un agen," as he had become "main sprack."

Pinneger, senior, had given a true account of young Hopeful: he was really no longer a child, but a strapping boy, a full head and shoulders taller than others of the same age. He had mingled to some purpose with other village urchins, and had acquired a store of low cunning, ready to be turned to account on a fitting opportunity.

"New brooms sweep clean," says the proverb. The first week of Jack's re-engagement he kept up such a racket with voice and clapper, that the bitch-fox in the neighbouring wood removed with her cubs to some less noisy retreat, and the jay abandoned a place where she could not

hear her own harsh note; but, to quote another homely adage, all this was "too hot to hold long,"—the clapper was, after a while, heard merely at intervals, and Jack's voice was raised only when the birds became "howdacious," and mustered very strongly.

At length, the farmer was informed that Jack did not discharge his duty faithfully; an intimation which caused Master Large to be constantly on the watch. He had began to think that his informant was actuated by some malicious feeling, when he learnt that Jack was in the habit of dressing up a figure with part of his clothes so artfully, that it looked at a distance like himself. Thus dummy performed the duty of bird-keeper, while Jack went to sleep under a hedge, or rambled in the wood hard by.

A little watching verified this story, and the farmer determined to administer a sound thrashing to Jack. But to *catch* him was the first thing to be accomplished. Whenever Master Large came in sight, Jack betook himself to the other side of the field, and, as his master could not run twenty yards without

great bodily fatigue, there was no coming up with him.

One day, however, Master Large suddenly entered the field, to the great consternation of Jack, who, catching a glimpse of him just in time, immediately scrambled through the hedge, and dived into a crop of beans, which the farmer beat in all directions, in the hope of making him break cover, but to no purpose; the young vagabond was too cunning to be taken, and Master Large gave up the pursuit for that day. As soon as the farmer had quitted the place, Jack Pinneger emerged from the beans, and remarked to a labourer who was passing,

"Ha! a cou'dn't vollow by *zent;* maester was dogg*ed* deep, but I was deeper!"

"Ha! he 'll nab th' zome day," observed the man; "a luk'd desperd scrow; a did hakker ter'bly."

"A must ketch m' vust!" thought Jack.

Notwithstanding this narrow escape, Jack, after a few days, relapsed into his former habits; and one sultry afternoon was snoring under the hedge, while a swarm of flies and other insects were buzzing his lullaby. Suddenly he

awoke; the heavy tread of some one was advancing. He leapt on his feet, and saw the angry visage of his master. There was no scrambling through the hedge this time; it was too high and thick; but there was a gate a few yards off, and he made a dash intending to clear it. But this was an evil hour for Jack; his leap was a bad one, and down he came inside the gate. Before he could rise he was grasped by the muscular fist of his master and a good hazel-rod was applied to his back and shoulders with a vigour that showed the operator to be in earnest! Loudly roared the youthful clod-hopper, and loudly resounded the blows which the farmer administered to him, resembling the thwacks of a flail, on a barn floor; but Master Large was soon out of breath with his exercise, and, relinquishing his grasp, bade him "go along, and tell his vather that he'd zartinly com' to th' gallus!"

Jack Pinneger ran home as fast as his legs could carry him, and, with slubbered face, and shoulders smarting with his stripes, presented himself before his mother, who, as ninety-nine

mothers in a hundred make a practice of doing, took his part, and declared "her bwoy zhouldn't be zard zo,—no, that a zhou'dn't, if her kneow'd it."

The consequences of this maternal sympathy were soon apparent; young Jack Pinneger became one of the idlest boys in the parish; and, when the devil finds people idle, he never fails to set them at mischief. Where he was next employed is of no moment; it will be quite sufficient to relate that he never was at work for more than a week together at one place, except at harvest-time when hands are scarce. As he grew up, he associated himself with several notoriously bad characters in the village, fellows who were known to be addicted to poaching,—an employment which, whatever may be said in songs written on that subject, tends more to demoralise a rural population than London gentlemen would suppose. Make a man a poacher, and you set him on the high road to ruin,—a career which probably ends in highway-robbery, burglary, and even their not unfrequent consequence—murder.

By the time Jack Pinneger was twenty he stood six feet two inches, without his shoes—a perfect *lusus naturæ*. On a pair of ample shoulders, and a corresponding breadth of chest, was a small, round, bullet-shaped head, with the hair growing very low on what, for distinction's sake, must be termed the forehead, however narrow and unintellectual it really was. He was long-armed, and his hands were as large as the paws of a bear, while his long spindle-legs described the lower moiety of the letter X. His feet gave the lie to our multiplication-table—there were at least eighteen inches in Jack Pinneger's foot; he would have been a most valuable second to a timid gentleman in an "affair of honour."

When the gigantic clodpole was abroad in the day-time, he was generally to be found in the beer-shop—often a seminary for rustic thieves,—with some of his dissolute companions; and at these meetings their plans for the night were frequently digested and matured. On one of these occasions, Tom Iles, a desperate old ruffian, who was one of the most practised

poachers in the hundred, proposed to him what he termed "a bit o' vancy work."

"Ha!" said Jack; "what 's that, owld bwoy? robbin' a hen-roost, or taking owld Smith's geese? or Molly Large's bees?"

"Oh! noa, noa," replied Iles, "I never touches they; the last bees I tuk' stung m' hor*a*bly; I thenks I had a dozen sting*es* in the calves o' my legs, and be d—d to 'em. I'll never touch them zart o' thengs any mwore. What do 'e zay to thuck black ram o' Wild's?"

"The black ram!"

"Ha! d' ye knaw'n?"

"To be zhure I do; but what be 'e gwain to do wi"n? a fine young yeow 'd be much better."

"Tell th' what," said Iles; "thuck ram 's th' vinest in the county. Bill Smith gwoes up to Lunnun wi' the stage-waggon to-morrow; and if we cou'd meet un at top o' th' hill, he'd take un up to Lunnun alive, and zell un vor us."

"Can 'e trust un?"

"Ho! to be zhure uz can. Bill 's one o' th'

right zart, I can tell 'e." Which, in polite English, gentle reader, means a scoundrel who acts as a go-between of the rustic thieves and the dealers in stolen property of the London market.

Jack Pinneger required but little persuasion to induce him to join in the enterprise; and, that very evening, when the inhabitants of the village were in their beds, he and his companion in iniquity sallied forth to rob Farmer Wild of his noble black ram. The two worthies entered the field, and had no difficulty in finding the object they sought, who, even in the darkness, was conspicuous among the flock. The ram was quickly seized, thrown on its back, and its four legs tied together with a stout piece of cord; then old Iles helped Jack to get it on his back, which he accomplished with some difficulty, for the creature was heavy. Jack, bringing the animal's legs over his head, somewhat in the manner of a porter's *knot*, trudged off, and whispered to his companion to follow. They had not gone many steps, when they were alarmed by a noise at a little distance.

"Come on," said Iles softly; "be cussed iv I dwon't thenk th' zhepherd 's comin'."

Pinneger quickened his steps, and made towards a high gate, when at that moment the barking of a dog, and the voices of men, disturbed the stillness of the night. Not doubting but that they had been watched, old Iles, without saying another word, leaped over the gate, and fairly took to his heels! Jack swore a bitter oath.

"Th' cowardly owld wosbird!" said he; *he 's* a pretty vellow to help a body."

With these words he climbed the gate with some difficulty; but, as he attempted to descend on the other side, his burden over-balanced him. His huge ungainly body fell forward, and the ram dropped with a jerk behind, while the animal's feet catching him under the chin, performed the office of a halter, and strangled him almost as effectually as if he had been under the hands of the executioner!

The next morning Jack Pinneger's body was found by some of the men on the farm, stiff and stark, suspended across the gate, with the ram's

legs around his neck. Although it was clear to all who saw the strange sight how he came by his death, it was not long before the village wives began to read their little ones a lecture on the sad consequence of evil habits, quoting the example of Jack Pinneger, who had been choked by the devil in the shape of a *black ram!*

THE HARVEST-HOME.

"THOMAS, what be a *parkeypine?*"

"Lar'! doesn't thee kneow, Bill? Why, it be a zart of a hanimal as they breeds in Novey Scotia, or zome zuch outlandish pleace. I zeed one on 'em last Zizeter vair, and a martal odd-looking varment a was, to be zhure!"

"What was a like?"

"Why zummut like a peg, only a's vet was sharter, and a's got a power o' plaguy long spikes all auver 's body. They *do* zay as how a can drow 'em at 'e when a's tarmented and put in a pelt. Thuck un I zeed the zhowman zed was a vemale."

"What, in the neam o' vartin, be a vemale, Tom?"

"What a gawney th' bist, Bill! why, a zow's a vemale—a 'oman 's a vemale."

"Haw! haw! I zees! Then a man 's a *he*-male, I war'nd?"

"Lar'! no; there ben't no zuch theng as a he-male, y' gawney!—why, th' bist a bigger vool than Jack Goddin!"

"Ah, zo you thenks; but Jack aint zuch a vool as a looks, I can tell 'e. What d' ye thenk a zed one day last winter to maester? Maester was very vond o' plaguing Jack, and used to ax un in th' middle o' winter if a'd heeard the cuckoo? One day a comed into the grounds, and began to tarment Jack as usual. Jack purtended not to hear un, and then maester halloo'd at un. Jack heard un all the time, and now a turned round, and grinned like a dog at a red-hot cowlter. 'Noa, I aint, measter,—I aint heeard the cockoo to-day,' says 'e; 'but I heeard th' *owl* just now, pretty smartish.'"

"Haw! haw! haw! haw! that *was* a good un! What *did* measter zay to 't?"

"A didn't zay anything to Jack, but a looked a leetle flustrated like; and when a went drough th' geat a grunted zummut about 'a peart young wosbird.'"

"Haw! haw! haw! Measter won't tarment un agen, I war'nd!"

It is time that we should make the reader

acquainted, with the parties in this classic dialogue. They were two ploughboys, in the service of a wealthy Wiltshire yeoman, who, as they lay at their length under a hedge, discussing their noon-tide meal, thus entertained each other. Tom, the learned in zoology, was a conceited young rascal, who had paid many visits to the market-town, where he had acquired a spice of what the poet designates "a dangerous thing," with which he surprised his mates on such occasions as this. His companion would have left all the sights in the world for a dish of bacon and cabbage; but on this particular day he was anticipating a feast of a higher order, to wit, a harvest-home supper.

"I aint yett much breakvast," observed Bill; "and I wont touch a morsel mwore now, vor I zeed um a makin' zich a passel o' puddens up at th' house. I yeard our mother zay as how there was mwore nor a score on um, and Maester Harnblow ha' killed a ship (sheep), and they be gwoin' to make un into pies; and there's a girt chine to be bwiled, too; and ——"

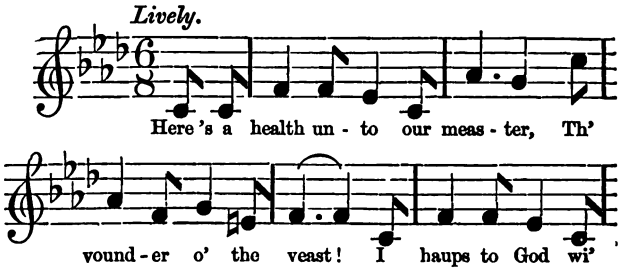
"Od drattle th'!" cried Tom, interrupting

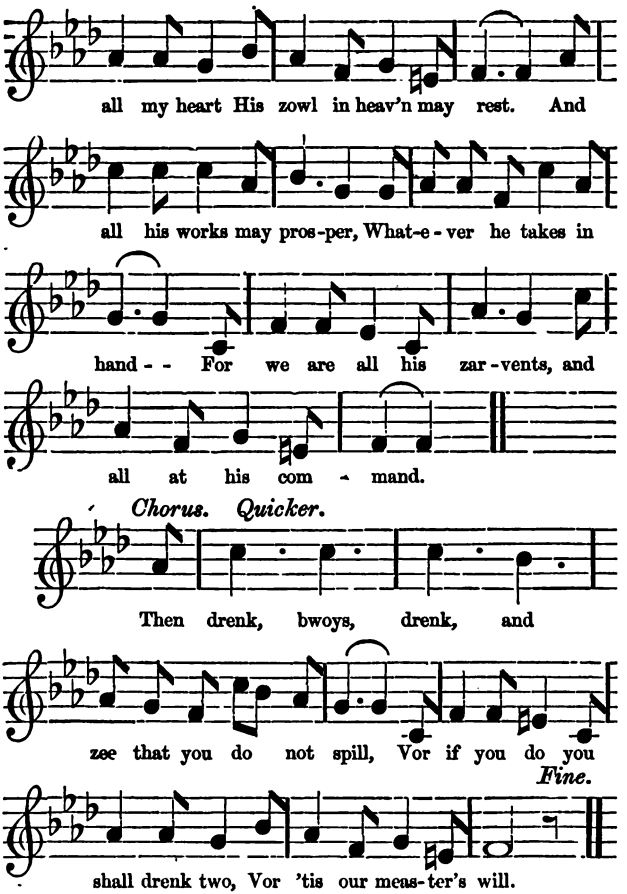
his enumeration, "th' bist allus thenkin' o' yettin'! Look'e yander, there's Jack Ayres and Jem Smith gwoin' to vight! How Jack does hakker, to be zhure!"

True enough the group of men at the other end of the field were in commotion, for two of their number were quarrelling violently, and by their gesticulations appeared inclined to settle the dispute with their fists; but the reappearance of their master at the critical moment obliged them to separate and betake themselves to their work.

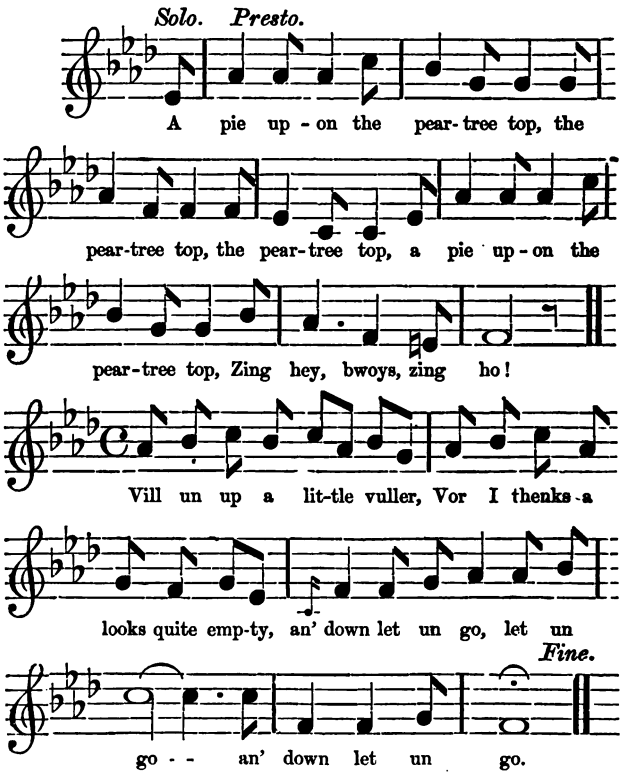
By seven o'clock the last load was drawn into the farmer's well-stored "barken," and shortly afterwards his ample kitchen was crammed with the rude guests invited on such occasions, the clatter of knife and fork indicating the vigour of the attack upon the good things provided for their special entertainment. Supper being despatched, the ale circulated freely; for there was no stint in those piping-days of the English farmer. Then there was *singing*, at which Pan himself would have pricked up his ears. "John Barleycorn," "When I had money," and "The

Leathern Bot-tel," were executed with Stentorian lungs, and to the great delight of the company; who were so occupied with their entertainment that they did not observe the absence of the two men who had quarrelled in the morning. The evening wore away, and the concluding ceremony was commenced, to the amusement of the female part of the guests, on whom also John Barleycorn had performed wonders. As this ceremony of a harvest-supper may not be known to many of our readers we shall endeavour to describe it as briefly as possible. Every male guest is by turns seated in a chair. One of the company then rises, with a mug of beer in his hand, and sings:—



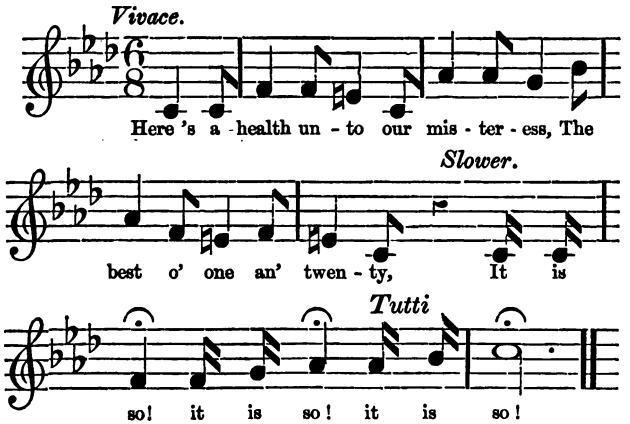

all my heart His zowl in heav'n may rest. And
all his works may pros-per, What-e-ver he takes in
hand - - For we are all his zar-vents, and
all at his com - mand.
Chorus. Quicker.
Then drenk, bwoys, drenk, and
zee that you do not spill, Vor if you do you
Fine.
shall drenk two, Vor 'tis our meas-ter's will.

Another man then rises, with a jug of beer, and sings as follows:—



CHORUS—And down let un go.

While this is being sung, the jug of the first singer is filled to running over, and the seated man is forced to drink, *nolens volens*, to the words of the chorus, the jug being held to his mouth, while his ears are rubbed violently, and the liquors is spilled down his bosom. If he be a three-gallon man, he may escape being made utterly drunk this time; but he has to drink to the health of his mistress before he rises. The jug is replenished, and instead of the former stanzas the following is sung:—



Da Capo—"Vill un up a little vuller," and Chorus, "Then drenk, boys! drenk!"

The man holding the jug now applies it to the mouth of the seated wight, and purposely spills a good deal of the liquor over him, singing all the while

"Vill un up unto the brim,
Unto the brim, unto the brim,
And let your next neighbour joggle it in.
Zeng hey, boys, zeng ho!"

The chorus then sing.

"Then drenk, bwoys, drenk," &c.

This rude frolic had been indulged in for some time, and the mirth of the rustic party was becoming each moment more boisterous, when Jack Ayres suddenly entered.

Nobody liked Jack Ayres: he bore a bad character; was suspected of poaching occasionally; and was, moreover, an ill-tempered cur, with whom his mates could never agree. As before observed, he was not missed at the feast, partly because he was not wanted, and partly owing to their being unusually engaged; but his sudden apparition among them refreshed their recollection, and then they remembered that there was another besides Ayres who had not sat down with

them—Jem Smith had not been seen since sunset.

"Halloo, Jack! where hast *thee* bin?" roared one of the party. "We be all purty nigh drunk a'ready; here's to 'e!"

Jack looked furtively around him, and smoothed the collar of his smock-frock: though evidently put on for the evening, it was much rumpled, and soiled with mould. He seated himself, and took a long draught of ale, which, however, had not the effect of allaying his evident perturbation. He next filled a pipe; but, after a whiff or two, he laid it down, and seated himself in the chimney-corner, apparently with a desire of shunning observation. But this strange conduct brought the eyes of all upon him, especially those of the two boys introduced to the reader at the commencement of our story. Emboldened by the ale they had drunk, they began to teaze Jack with impertinent questions, which they would not have dared to address to him at any other time.

"Why, Jack!" cried one of them, "we thought th' wouldnst come! What 's got howld

o' th', mun? Have 'e bin to vight it out wi' Jem, eh?"

Ayres turned deadly pale at this question, and trembled like a palsied man. His emotion was not unobserved by the boys, who continued to banter him.

"Why, what dost hakker zo vor, mun!" cried they. "Why, a body *would* thenk thou 'st killed and yet un, haw! haw! haw!"—and the laugh of the urchins rose high above the hubbub of the company.

Ayres looked daggers at his tormentors, and, rising from his seat, with a bitter oath, attempted to kick one of them. The boys retreated to the other side of the kitchen, alarmed at his violence, and Ayres at the same moment beheld a sight which cause him to sink down on his seat with a suppressed groan. A small terrier dog which belonged to him trotted into the kitchen, with tail erect, and holding in its mouth a man's hat, which he laid at the feet of his master.

"Hallo! what 's this?" cried several of the company. "Why, here 's Jack Ayres' dog,

Pincher, wi' zomebody's hat! Where did th' leetle wosbird get that?"

"Whos'n it is?" asked a dozen voices.

Each by turns looked at the hat, which one of the company had snatched up, and shook his head with a "t' aint mine," when the boy Tom came forward.

"Dald if't beant Jem Smith's!" said he.

"It's a d—d lie!" roared Ayres, recovering himself.

"Ha!" cried the carter, "thee zeem 'st to kneow zummut about it, anyhow."

Ayres saw in a minute that he had committed himself, and was silent.

"There's zummut ackerd here," continued the carter. "Where's Jem Smith? Has anybody zeed un?"

"I zeed un crassing th' bruk, jist a'ter we got th' last lwoad into th' barken," said Tom. "A zeed a was a gwoin' whoam to make hiszelf a leetle bit tidy. I dare zay Jack Ayres kneows where a went to."

He was interrupted by a torrent of violent abuse from Ayres, who protested loudly that he had not seen the missing man.

The merriment was now at an end; the women and girls looked pale and alarmed, and the men crowded round, their flushed countenances assuming an expression of seriousness as they noted the determined tone of the carter and the trepidation of the accused.

"Ye 're all a passel o' malice-minded wos-birds!" cried Ayres. "I 'll be cussed if I stays among zich a zet!"

With these words he attempted to leave the kitchen, when the carter interposed.

"Noa, noa!" said he, firmly, "we dwon't part zo easy, Jack. Thee kneowst zummut about Jem, and had better tell the truth."

"I tell th' I dwon't!" roared Ayres, attempting to rush from the kitchen; but he was seized and detained by the carter, who felt the more certain that there had been some foul play.

Messengers were now despatched to the cottage of the missing man's parents, when it was discovered that Smith had left some time before sunset, and that he had been joined by Ayres.

It will scarcely be necessary to relate that, under such circumstances, Jack Ayres was

marched off to the neighbouring town, where he was consigned to the "round-house" for the night, and that on the following morning he was taken before the justice, on suspicion of having murdered his fellow-labourer, James Smith. The evidence against him seemed so clear that the magistrate determined to send the case for trial, and accordingly committed the prisoner to the county jail, the assizes being near at hand.

The day of trial at length came. Jack, among his friends, had raised money sufficient to fee an Old Bailey counsel, who, by blustering and cross-examination, succeeded in so flabbergastering the simple witnesses for the prosecution, that the prisoner was in a fair way of being acquitted; for the jury, as is sometimes the case, had made up their minds not to be satisfied with mere circumstantial evidence, when a hubbub was heard in court, which the judge in vain endeavoured to suppress, and two or three men rushed in, exclaiming that a human body had just been found in the brook which ran through the village where the prisoner lived, and that it had been recognised by every one as the remains of James Smith.

On hearing this intelligence, the prisoner's countenance fell, and he sunk senseless on the floor of the dock. On recovering, overwhelmed by the evidence against him, he begged hard for mercy, protesting that the deceased had attacked him first, and that he only acted in self-defence; but this plea did not avail him, and Jack Ayres was sentenced to be hung. His execution of course furnished a holiday spectacle to all the country round; and to this day, rustic dames, when the boys of the village quarrel and fall to loggerheads, shake their heads portentously, warn them of the fatal effects of ungovernable passion, and cite the sad example of Jack Ayres.

THE VARGESES.

YES, though there is much to interest, much to admire, and much to *learn*, among the busy haunts of men; though we are not of the number of those who travel from one end of a great city to the other, and say that all is barren, yet we cordially subscribe to the proverb, "God made the country, and man the town." Though we think with Doctor Johnson, that the view of Saint Paul's from Fleet Street *is* imposing, yet we prefer the hill side glowing in an autumn sunset, the murmur of a trout-stream as it sweeps over its gravelly bed, while the gnats dance fandangoes above the eddies, to the head-splitting rattle and busy hum of the locality just mentioned.

Yes, when "cabined, cribbed, confined," some years since, in the immediate neighbourhood of one of the noisiest thoroughfares in

London, our heart yearned for the country. In our reveries of the scenes of our youth we heard the mellow peal of the bells in the old grey tower, the thwop of the thresher's flail in our honoured relative's well-stored barn, the cawing of the fussy colony of rooks in the old elms, ay, even the joyous quack of the ducks in the mill stream, like the loud ha! ha! from a village alehouse. The recollection of these scenes stole upon our senses, till, like some favourite and indulged old setter dozing before the fire, we fancied ourselves afield again,

> "Where the partridge o'er the sheaf
> Whirred along the yellow vale,"

and woke to discover that we were dreaming!

Though for some twenty years past our hand has been busily occupied in ministering to our necessities, we have not forgotten the days of our childhood.

> "Ah, fair delights, that o'er the soul,
> On Memory's wing like shadows fly!
> Ah, flowers! which Joy from Eden stole,
> While Innocence stood smiling by."

Can we forget the kind smile at the lattice as we came home, with satchel on shoulder; or the jug of syllabub with which we were rewarded occasionally, if neither rod nor dunce's cap had been called in requisition for our especial profit during the day? Those evenings when the leaves looked greener, and the sun went down in richer hues than it now seems to wear; when the bat took up the hunt which the swallow and the martin had abandoned? Such a summer's eve as poor Kirke White describes, when

> "Down the deep, the miry lane,
> Creaking comes the empty wain,
> And driver on the shaft-horse sits,
> Whistling now and then by fits;
> And oft with his accustomed call
> Urging on the sluggish Ball.
> The barn is still, the master's gone,
> And thresher puts his jacket on,
> While Dick upon the ladder tall
> Nails the dead kite to the wall!"

The last two lines remind us of the gable-end of the barn already spoken of. What a Montfaucon of feathered offenders it was! There was the scritch-owl, which Tom the Carter had

shot, in deadly revenge for its having frightened Molly and himself nearly out of their wits one moonlight night. The sparrow-hawk and his hapless mate, both condemned and executed for taking tithe of missus's chickens. The martin and the stoat, too, were there,—"lynched" without mercy, for nocturnal visits to the poultry-roost. The "goat-sucker," destroyed for no other reason, perhaps, than that he was a night flyer, and therefore could be "no good." The robber kite, the cravings of whose ravenous maw could only be appeased with lamb; and the carrion crow, shot in the very act of embowelling a fat ewe which had rolled on its back into a furrow; nor must we forget poor "Molly Hern," who, defending herself after her wing had been broken, pecked out Carlo's right eye. "Rats and mice, and such small deer," completed the grim medley.

It may seem to the fastidious like bad taste, and as if we had an ear for what is vulgar, when we avow our partiality for the very dialect of the rural population. To all such, however, we have only to remark that, if they will take the trouble to analyse it, they will find it more

closely resembles that which the great Alfred wrote and spoke, than our modern English. Cockneys of London, bear this in mind, and cease to ridicule the homely lingo of the Chawbacons! But we have been wandering from our purpose, which was, to relate certain passages in the history of a family of "poor vauk," whom the student of rustic life may still find located not many miles from the town of Highworth.

"Now, do 'e plaze to walk in a bit, zur, and rest 'e, and dwont 'e mind my measter up agin th' chimley carner. Poor zowl an hin, he 've a bin despert ill ever zence t' other night, when a wur tuk ter'ble bad wi' th' rheumatiz in 's legs and stummick. He 've a bin and tuk dree bottles o' doctor's stuff; but I 'll be whipped if a do simbly a bit th' better var 't. Lawk, zur, but I be main scrow to be ael in zich a caddle, ael alang o' they childern. They 've a bin a leasin, and when um coomed whoame, they ael tuk and drowed the carn ael among th' vire stuff, and zo here we be, ael in a muggle like. And you be lookin' middlinish, zur, and ael as if 'e was

shrammed. I'll take and bleow up th' vire a mossel; but what be them bellises at? here they be slat a-two! and here 's my yeppurn they 've a' bin and scarched, and I 've a-got narra 'nother 'gin Zunday besepts thisum!"

This elegant sample of North Wiltshire eloquence was uttered nearly in a breath, by Mistress Varges, the wife of a labourer with a large family, as the poor man's master entered the cottage to inquire after his health, and whether he would be soon able to return to his work.

Farmer Smith paid little heed to the salutation, but proceeded to ask the sick man how he found himself.

"Oh, I be uncommon bad, zur, martal bad, I assure ye," was the reply; "I can't draw my vet a'ter m'. I veryly thenks th' doctor's stuff has made m' wuss."

"Howld yer tongue vor a gwaney!" cried Mrs. Varges. Then, turning to the farmer, "A won't do as I tells un, zur; a 's as cam and as obstinate as a mule. I gied un zome stuff as I got made up at Highworth from Molly Ockle's resait, and when a took 't a made as many queer

vaces as Jem Radaway when a 's grinnin' drough a hos-collar."

The farmer took little heed of this remark, but, addressing himself to the invalid, told him he had better send to the town for advice, and that he would pay the expense. Just at the moment, a jolter-headed, gawkey, lop-eared youth entered the cottage, and, doffing his "wide-awake,"* made is obeisance to the farmer, who asked if he had obtained employment yet.

"Noa, zur, I ain't," was the answer.

"Then, if you 'll come to me the day after to-morrow," continued the farmer, "I 'll try and find you some. To-day you must go to Highworth, and ask Doctor Brown for something for your father. Run up to the farm, and wait there till I come and write a note to him."

Off went the boy, and the worthy farmer proceeded to ask how the children got on at the Sunday-school.

"Oh, featish, zur," replied Mistress Varges. "Sally, yander," pointing to a child in the little

* A wag at our elbow suggests that the term *wide-awake* was applied to these hats because they have no *nap* on them.

garden at the back of the cottage, "her 's gettin' on oonderful: a can rade in the Bible pretty smartish, I assure 'e, Maybe you 'd like to hear'n, zur. Here, Sally, coom hedder, and let th' genelman hear 'e rade."

The child came running in: Mistress Varges had taught it the duty of obedience at any rate. The well-thumbed Bible was taken down from the dusty shelf, and opened at the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis, the little imp being told that it might skip the first ten verses, to save time.

The girl read better than a girl of her years generally does, and Mistress Varges looked alternately at her offspring and the farmer, as if watching the effect of this display of "larnin'" on his mind. By and by the child arrived at the forty-seventh verse, "Nahor's son, whom Milcha bare," &c., which she read "Milcha *bore*," &c.,—a very excusable mistake in so young a reader; but it was a very serious one to the ears of Mistress Varges.

"Hey, hey, stop a bit, there!" exclaimed the anxious parent,—"milk a *boar!*—that 's impossible, child. Gwo auver it agen, do 'e."

The little hopeful blushed, looked foolish, and read again,—"Milcha bare," &c.

"Ha! milk a bear! that *may* be child. Gwo on."

Farmer Smith, however, thought this enough; so, giving the child a penny, he left the cottage, and went laughing all the way to the farm at Mistress Varges's Biblical acquirements. As soon as he got home, he despatched the boy Sam to the town to procure medicine for his father.

Sam was not so "sprack" as his sister,—a fact of which his amiable mamma often took care to remind him; and he certainly monopolized the greater part of the kicking and cuffing dispensed in the family of the Vargeses, his father frequently telling him he was "the laziest young 'oosbird in the parish," a declaration to which his mother would subjoin her confident belief that he would live to be hung. He was certainly of the number of those described by honest Piers Plowman:—

> "Grete lobies and longe,
> That lothe were to swynke,"

a gawkey, lop-eared, clumsy urchin, who ate

thrice as much as he earned. But we have now to speak of his journey to Highworth. Sam arrived in the town, and proceeded at once to the doctor, whose assistant he found busily engaged. Having delivered the note, he was told to take a seat, while the medicine was prepared. Sam did as he was bidden; but, while the assistant's back was occasionally turned, he dipped his fingers into a gallipot which stood on the counter, the contents of which he thought very nice.

The doctor's youth was a wag, and, pretending not to notice Sam's attack on the gallipot; he asked him if he would take a little warm beer before he started. Sam never refused a good offer, and, of course, said "eez" to the invitation.

"You must be very careful of this physic," said the pupil of Galen to the grateful Sam, who thought him "such a nice young genelman;"—"you must be careful, I say, and take care you don't hold it close to you; for, if you do, it will play the d—l with you before you get home."

Sam stared, but assured the youth he 'd take

great care. A couple of draughts and a box of pills were then delivered to him, and off he set home.

He had scarcely cleared the town, when some violent twinges led him to think that he was not obeying the injunction of the doctor's assistant, so he held out the physic at arm's length, and trudged homeward. The people he met on the road grinned at him as they passed by, and thought he was either drunk or mad; but Sam grinned at them again, and muttered to himself, "I ben't zich a vool as y' thenks!"

Alas for Sam! the young scoundrel who had dispensed the medicine had stirred up with the beer a powder, the effect of which was to make him grimace with pain like a monkey. What could the doctor's stuff be that he was carrying? Should he throw it away? No; if he did that, his mother would thrash him to death. What was to be done? Sam's wits were sharpened by necessity; he took out his clasp-knife (what country boy is without one?) and, cutting a stick from the hedge, fastened the medicine to the end of it, and again proceeded on his way,

holding the supposed cause of his distress at arm's length.

At length he neared the cottage, and saw his mother's vixen visage peering out at the door.

"Od drattle th' vor a loitering young wosbird," cried Mrs. Varges, shaking her fist at him, "I 'll gie 't th' presently!"

With this threat she attempted to snatch the stick out of Sam's hand, intending, no doubt, to apply it to his shoulders as soon as she had detached the medicine from it. She was, however, prevented doing this, by the boy, who started back.

"Oh, dwon't 'e, mother, dwon't 'e!" he cried, "dwon't 'e touch un, a 'll zar 'e dreadful! I 'll never gwo to Highworth for any mwore as long as I lives!"

"What's that?" inquired Varges Pater, on hearing the uproar.

Sam explained to his father, while Mistress Varges vowed he was bewitched.

"Od dang it!" cried his father, "dwon't 'e bring 't in here. I won't touch 't, now how! Gwo and hang 't on thuck tree." And, ac-

cordingly, Sam, with many grimaces, fastened it on the bough of an apple-tree in front of the cottage, grinning and swearing all the while that it made him "wus."

The next day Mr. Brown, the surgeon and apothecary, riding up to the dwelling of the Vargeses, inquired after the patient, and whether he had taken the medicine that had been sent him.

"Oh, no, no, no, that a aint!" screamed Mrs. Varges. "I wouldn't let un tak 't! I wouldn't let zich cusnation stuff come into th' ouse. It inamwoast killed our bwoy Sam. There 'tis, hung up in thuck tree!"

The doctor turned to look in the direction in which the bony fore-finger of Mrs. Varges pointed, and saw, to his great amazement, the medicine suspended from the branch of a tree, like a trapped mole.

"Ha! ha! I see how 'tis," said he. "Reach me down the medicine—your husband must take it immediately; and mind you tell your boy to leave the gallipot alone when he goes for another draught."

Sam, who had been attentively listening to

this conversation, had heard enough to satisfy him that he was sadly compromised; so, without further ado, he betook himself to the fields, swearing that "his father might go to Highworth hizzelf, if a wanted mwore doctor's stuff, for *he* wou'dn't;" while Mistress Varges, as soon as the 'pothecary had departed, began to entertain her submissive spouse with the usual catalogue of their hopeful son's delinquencies, summing up the whole with the wonted comfortable assurance, that he would live to be hung!

WAT SANNELL'S RIDE TO HIGHWORTH.

A Legend of the Days of James the First.

"THEN ye dwon't believe in witches, naybour?" queried old George Pinnock, of his friend and gossip, Samuel Hornblow, as they sat enjoying a jug of ale at the door of the former, in the quiet village of Blunsdon.

"Noa, George, I dwon't," was the reply. "I dwon't beleeve in nothin' o' th' zart. It 's only a passel o' old wives' stories, and may do very well to vrighten children."

"Now, there you 're wrong, Maester Sam'ell, —quite wrong, I do azhure ye. It 's very plain there *be* such people. What was that woman as Saul went to zee? And ain't our King his self writ a book about witches and hobgoblins,

and all them there zart o' things. I yeard 'em talking about it at Highworth last Vriday as ever was."

"Ay, ay, naybour, that's all very well," replied the incredulous Master Hornblow; "kings can zee and zay many things that we poor vauk can't."

"Eez, zart'inly," rejoined Pinnock; "but 't ain't the King only; our curate, Zur Rafe, zays a man as dwon't beleeve in ghosts and witches is worse nor a haythen. Now, I tell ye what, Measter Hornblow," here his voice subsided to a whisper, "it 's my belief we 've got a witch pretty nigh us." He pointed as he spoke to a dilapidated cottage at a short distance from the spot. Master Hornblow, looking furtively over his shoulder, set down the jug which he was about to raise to his lips, and with open mouth and staring eyes gave evidence that his unbelief was not very deeply rooted.

"Ah!" continued the village demonologist, "there 's a witch there, naybour, as zure as my name 's Gearge. Young Tom Strainge says the devil often goes to zupper wi' Molly Phillips; and one night when a was gwoin' whoame a

yeard a strainge naise, and looked in at the winder."

"Well, what did a zee?" interrupted Hornblow, whose curiosity was excited, staring with all his eyes,—"what did a zee?"

"Why, a martal odd zight. Moll Phillips was a zittin' at a table, wi' her two cats, and a strainge un as big as a calf was a zittin' oppozite to um."

"The Lard zave us! ye dwon't zay zo!" ejaculated Master Hornblow, screwing round his seat, and bringing his back to the wall.

"Eez, they was all a making a strange mowing and chattering; but Tom cou'dn't make out a word on't, and while a was a peering into the place summut made the bwoy sneeze, when, whew! all was dark in a minnit, and zomebody took Tom by the scruff o' the neck, and pitched 'un auver the wall! I warrand he 'll never gwo anigh thuck place agen."

"Very strainge, naybour, ver—y strainge," observed Master Hornblow, looking aghast. "If the justice comes to hear on 't Moll will be burnt zome day in Highworth market-place for a zart'inty."

"Whist! naybour," said Pinnock, placing his finger on his nose and winking significantly. "These sort o' volk have long ears, and are nation spiteful. Ye wou'dn't like Moll and her cats to pay ye a visit to-night, would ye?"

"Oh Lard! noa, noa!" cried the convert; "dwon't ye talk on 't, naybour,—they zay, talk o' the owld 'un, and a's zure to zhow's harns!"

At that moment the shadow of something passing before the sun was thrown on the white wall of the cottage. It was caused by the transit of the old raven who built in the huge elms at the entrance of the village; but Master Hornblow's terror was already excited to the utmost pitch, and never doubting but that it was the shadow of the foul fiend himself, he bellowed like a bull-calf, and overthrowing the table in his fright, clung to his friend for protection.

"Od drattle the stupid body!" cried Pinnock, on seeing the damage that had been done; "thee hast broken my best jug, and spilt a pint o' good liquor."

"Never mind, naybour," said Master Samuel,

recovering himself, "thee shalst have a quart for it when thee com'st to *my* house."

"Why what wast vrightened of, man?" continued Pinnock, lifting up the table;—"not of a shadow, zhurely, for Zur Rafe zays the old un has no shadow, nor have they as zell their-zelves; so, *when a witch zails by in the air on a moonlight night, you only zee the shadow of her besom.*"

"What's that you're talking about, Master Pinnock?" cried a young man, who came up at the moment on a bay gelding.

It was Wat Sannell, a servant of the Erneley family, then residing at Bury Blunsdon, a harum-scarum, dare-devil young fellow, whose good looks and activity were his sole recommendations.

"What's that you say, Gaffers?" cried he, addressing the pair.

"We're talking about witches," replied Pinnock."

"Then you're a couple of old gawnies," said the servitor, laughing.

"What! down't *ye* beleeve in 'em?" cried Master Pinnock.

"Beleeve in 'em!" echoed Wat. "No; and he 's a fool who does. Such things are out o' fashion now, Gaffer Pinnock."

"That 's as *you* think, Maester Wat, but we kneow better," said Pinnock. "Who zets up that girt thistle in the close, there? and who daanzes round 'un every night? Cut 'un down as often as 'e wull, and a greows dree times thicker, and stronger the next marnin'!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Wat. "If that 's the case, it ought to be as big as an elmen tree by this time, for I 've cut it down a dozen times, and last night I pulled it up by the roots (for I had on my hawking-glove), and threw it in at Moll Phillips' window. If she be a witch, 't will serve for a sallad when her master, the devil, comes to sup with her."

"I wou'dn't a done it for a purse o' Jacobuses," said Pinnock, in a subdued tone. "Moll's uncommon spiteful, and 'll pay ye off vor it, for a zart'inty."

"Pish!" exclaimed Wat. "We intend to duck her to-morrow. *I* don't care for witches; yet, beshrew me, if I couldn't believe Moll *was* one. I don't know how I came to be tempted;

but this morning, as I brought home my master's birding-piece, I saw one of her ugly black cats sitting on the wall, when I thought I would have a shot. Well, I let fly, and up sprung the brute as high as the cottage chimney! It fell down against the door, and brought out her mistress. By St. Christopher! how the jade swore when she saw her favourite riddled like a colender!"

"Then thee bist a very cruel fellow," observed Master Samuel Hornblow, who, no longer a sceptic, for some moments had been shuddering in silence, "and Moll will pay thee off vor 't."

Wat made no reply, but laughed loudly at the recollection of his feat. Pinnock asked him where he was going.

"I am going to Highworth, Gaffer, for a pair of hawk-bells for Mistress Dorothy, if you must know my business," said the serving-man; and, giving his horse the spur, he turned the corner, and was quickly out of sight.

"Those young maids, though they *be* high born, like a smart sarvin' man," remarked old Pinnock to his friend.

"Ay, ay, Gearge," said Master Hornblow,

trying to wink and look knowing: "in my young days I loved to look on a fair face, though *'t was* my master's daughter's."

In the meanwhile, Wat held on his way to Highworth, where he soon arrived, and having obtained the hawk-bells from the silversmith of whom they had been ordered, he took a review of the contents of his leathern purse, and found that he was master of some two or three shillings,—a sum in those days amply sufficient for a man to procure wherewithal to fuddle himself effectually; so, swaggering across the market-place, he entered the common room of the inn, and called for a pottle of double beer, which he had just discussed, when an old acquaintance entered. Good liquor vanishes apace when friends meet, and in about an hour Wat was just drunk enough to care for nobody.

While these boon companions were hobbing and nobbing, the day was wearing away, and the gathering clouds foretold a thunderstorm; but our serving-man determined to get rid of all his money before he left; and it was within half an hour of sunset when he quitted the inn, with an empty purse, an unsteady hand, and a

flushed face, the hawk-bells being carefully bestowed in his leathern purse. The town was soon left behind him, and the evening breeze cooled his heated brow. The heavens looked lowering, and distant thunder rumbled among the hills. As he held on his way, he espied at some distance before him a female figure seated on a large stone by the road-side.

"Some love-sick lass come to hold tryst with her swain!" muttered Wat to himself; "raythe a threatening evening for lovers' meeting."

He soon came up with the damsel, and not having the fear of her lover before his eyes, he threw himself from his horse, and walked towards her.

"My pretty maid," said he, putting on one of his most insinuating looks, and imitating the language which he had heard employed by his betters, "you must be lonely here without your lover."

The maiden averted her head, and drew her wimple closer to her face, as if abashed by his bold address.

"Ah," continued Wat, "alone, and yet so coy; then I must just take a peep at

my fair one's face. By your leave, sweet mistress."

With these words, he stooped to remove the damsel's wimple, when, oh Cupid! an unseen hand gave him a buffet which knocked his hat over his eyes, and he received at the same moment such a violent kick behind that it fairly sent him heels over head on to the greensward by the road-side.

Swearing a bitter oath, Wat scrambled on his legs, and prepared to take vengeance on the person who had assaulted him, very naturally supposing it was the lady's lover; but, to his great surprise, not a soul was to be seen; even the damsel herself was clean gone!

Wat, aghast, looked around him: there was not a bush, tree, or ditch within the distance of an arrow's flight, which could have sheltered his assailant.

"It was the devil!" thought he, "and the woman was a witch!" This reflection made his flesh creep, and his hair stand on end, and he remembered the words of old Pinnock a few hours before; so, remounting his horse, which was grazing quietly a few paces off, he proceeded on his way, somewhat sobered by this incident.

The sun now went down, red and fiery; the storm came on; the thunder became louder and louder, and vivid flashes of lightning occasionally lit up the landscape. Wat felt his heart tremble within him, and wished himself safe at home. As he held on his way at a round trot, he passed a cottage on his right, at the door of which he saw in the gloom a figure which he at a glance recognised as the same he had seen sitting by the road-side. She beckoned to him to enter; but our serving-man was not to be caught a second time. "Aroint thee, witch!" he cried, and, plying his spurs, he left the cottage far behind him. He, however, had not proceeded far, when he heard a loud grunt from a hog in the road, and the horse stumbling upon the animal, threw Wat over his head.

"Those who are born to be hung will never be drowned," says the proverb. Throw some people from a church-steeple, and they will light on their legs. Wat was one of these: he fell on his hands and knees, and thereby saved his neck. His first care on rising was to catch his horse, which he accomplished with some difficulty, for his bruises had rendered him stiff,

and his hands had been torn by the flinty road. But this was not all: on his leaping on the back of the gelding, the saddle slipped, and he was again precipitated to the ground. Muttering curses between his closed teeth, Wat regained his feet, and proceeded to tighten his saddle-girth. As he did so, he fancied he heard a stifled chuckling of exultation behind him, but, quickly remounting, he urged on his steed.

Bewildered by what had occurred, and perplexed by the darkness which now reigned around him, relieved only at intervals by the lightning, he took a wrong turning in the road, and had proceeded about three miles, when a vivid flash showed him that he had strayed from the right path. The object which the glare of the lightning revealed was a gibbet, on which swung the remains of a malefactor who had been executed on the spot some years previously. Wat knew by this ghastly sign-post that he was several miles from home, and, turning his horse's head, proceeded to retrace his steps; but this was not an easy matter: the thunder resounded like the explosions of heavy pieces of ordnance; the lightning rolled on the

ground in sheets of fire, and the rain fell in torrents. The stout heart of the dare-devil serving-man quailed at this fierce war of the elements, and a thousand times he cursed his evil stars, which had tempted him to tarry drinking at Highworth.

At length he regained the right road, and almost forgot the kicking, buffeting, and tumbling he had sustained, as he saw some prospect of reaching home without a broken neck. But he was not to reach home so easily. He had scarcely gone a hundred yards, when a huge black cat, the very image of that he had shot in the morning, leaped from the head of an ancient pollard oak hard by, into the middle of the road, its large eyes glowing like hot coals. The horse shyed as the creature raised itself on its hind-legs, as if to dispute the way. Wat, by the vigorous application of his spurs and riding-staff, endeavoured to urge forward his steed; but the animal refused to stir, and snorted in terror. In vain did he strive to dash onward, and crush the creature beneath the horse's feet; in vain did he attempt a diversion; the cat advanced, and its gaunt figure seemed to dilate

before them to an enormous size, when suddenly it darted forward, and leaped on the horse's neck. This was too much for Wat; his senses forsook him, and he fell to the ground in an agony of terror.

While this was passing, a little knot of gossips had assembled at the forge of Will Cullum, the village blacksmith. Some had gone thither for shelter from the storm; but there were two who made it their "custom always of an afternoon:"—these were the worthy clodpoles, Messieurs Pinnock and Hornblow. Many sage opinions were adventured on the storm, which was now passing away; and the old men began to indulge in surmises as to what had become of Wat, when on a sudden the clatter of hoofs was heard, and a horse, bridled and saddled, but without a rider, dashed through the village.

"Ha!" cried one, running to the door of the smithy, there goes the gelding, but where's Wat?"

"He 's got drunk, as usual," observed another coolly; "and the horse is gone home to a warm stable, while his rider prefers a bed on the cold ground."

"His next bed, I trow, will be in the Litten, if he be laying on the ground on such a night as this," said the smith. "Who 'll go out and look for 'n?"

"Not I," said Pinnock.

"Nor I," muttered Master Hornblow, with a shudder.

"Nor I," said a third worthy, affecting a cough. "I'm rheumatic, and have forsworn walking after nightfall."

"Why, you 're all afeard!" cried the smith. "I never met wi' such a pack of gawnies in my life! out upon ye!"

With these words the village Vulcan indignantly donned his leathern cap, and was about to proceed in search of Wat, for whom he had a kind of fellow-feeling, knowing his own infirmity if strong drink fell in his way, when a loud shout, or rather a shriek, was heard at a short distance.

"Whose voice was that?" cried Pinnock, looking aghast.

"It 's Wat's," said the smith. "Hark! here he comes."

"Help me! help me!" cried Wat, rushing frantically into the smithy, and nearly upsetting

some of the gossips,—"help me, Will Smith, for the love of God and the saints!"

Every eye was turned on the speaker, whose haggard look, bleeding face and hands, mud-bespattered clothes, and eyes staring and fixed, like those of a man while walking in his sleep, were well calculated to strike terror among the occupiers of the smithy.

"What is the matter?" cried several voices, —"what is the matter?"

"*I 'm bewitched!*" roared Wat. "I 'm bewitched, and driven mad!—help me, Will, and give me thy snaphaunce!"

"Thou art indeed mad!" said the smith; "and I will not give thee a weapon in such a state."

"Give it me—give it me!" roared Wat imploringly, "if ye would not be driven mad like I am! The witch waits without to seize me!"

He rushed forward as he spoke, and seized the weapon, which was suspended against the wall, and having ascertained that it was loaded, he took from his pouch the hawk-bells which he had brought from Highworth, and in an instant

crushed them with convulsive force between his teeth.

"Now, witch, we shall see who has the mastery!" said he, ramming home the hawk-bells, which he had converted into bullets, "*lead*, will not kill thee, but *silver* will send thee to thy master!"

He rushed from the smithy in the direction of the cottage occupied by Moll Phillips, followed at a distance by the smith and his friends, and shouting vengeance against his persecutors.

As he neared the miserable tenement occupied by the aged spinster, he saw through the gloom the eyes of a large cat, which was seated on the dwarf wall.

"Now I have thee!" cried Wat, and fired. But Grimalkin was too quick for him: nimbly dropping from the wall the animal fled away, while the whole charge shivered to fragments the latticed window of the cottage. Wat deemed his purpose effected, as he heard a loud and piercing scream rise high above the report of the piece; and, wound up to the highest pitch of excitement, the terrified drunkard fell

perchance be as fortunate as the happy scholar who dug up the soul of the deceased licentiate, while his companion went on his way deriding that which he could not understand.

I.

THERE be two zarts o' piple in this here world ov ourn: they as works ael day lang and ael the year round, and they as dwon't work at ael. The difference is jist a graat a-year, and they as dwon't work at ael gets the graat—that 's zartin!

II.

It 's oondervul to me how thengs *do* move about whenever a body 's got a drap o' zummut in 's yead. Last harrest, a'ter zupper, at th' house yander, I walked whoam by myzelf, and zeed the moon and the zeven stars dancin' away like vengeance. Then they there girt elmen trees in the close was a dancin' away like Bill Iles and his mates at a morris. My zarvice to 'e," zays I; "I haups you won't tread on my

twoes;" zo I went drough a sheard in th' hedge, instead o' goin' drough th' geat. Well, when I got whoam, I managed to vind the kay-hole o' th' doower—but 'twas a lang time afore I could get un to bide still enough,—and got up stayers. Massy upon us! the leetle table (I zeed un very plain by the light o' th' moon) was runnin' round th' room like mad, and there was th' two owld chayers runnin' a'ter he, and by and by, round comes the bed a'ter they two. "Ha! ha!" zays I, "that 's very vine; but how be I to lay down while you cuts zich capers?" Well, the bed comed round dree times, and the vowerth time I drowd myzelf flump atop ov un; but in th' marnin' I vound myzelf laying on the vloor, wi' ael me duds on! I never *could* make out this.

III.

I 've allus bin as vlush o' money as a twoad is o' veathers; but, if ever I gets rich, I'll put it ael in Ziszeter bank, and not do as owld Smith, the miller, did, comin' whoam vrom market one nite. Martal avraid o' thieves

a was, zo a puts his pound-bills and ael th' money a'd got about un, in a hole in the wall, and the next marnin' a' couldn't remember whereabouts 'twas, and had to pull purty nigh a mile o' wall down before a' could vind it. Stoopid owld wosbird!

IV.

Owld Jan Wilkins used to zay he allus cut's stakes when a went a hedgin', too lang; bekaze a' cou'd easily cut 'em sharter if a' wanted, but a' cou'dn't make um langer if 'em was cut too shart. Zo zays I; zo I allus axes vor more than I wants. Iv I gets that, well and good; but if I axes vor little, and gets less, it's martal akkerd to ax a zecond time, d' ye kneow!

V.

Piple zay as how they gied th' neam o' *moonrakers* to we Wiltshire vauk, bekase a passel o' stupid bodies one night tried to rake the shadow o' th' moon out o' th' bruk, and tuk 't vor a thin cheese. But that's th' wrong

ind o' th' story. The chaps az was doin' o' this was smugglers, and they was a vishing up zome kegs o' sperrits, and only purtended to rake out a cheese! Zo the exciseman az axed 'em the questin had his grin at 'em; but they had a good laugh at he, when 'em got whoame the stuff!

VI.

Everybody kneows old Barnzo, as wears his yead o' one zide. One night a was coming whoame vrom market, and vell off 's hos into the road, a was *zo* drunk. Some chaps coming by picked un up, and zeein' his yead was al o' one zide, they thought 'twas out 'o jint, and began to pull 't into 'ts pleace agen, when the owld bwoy roar'd out, "Barn zo, (born so) I tell 'e!" Zo a' was allus called owld Barnzo ever a'terwards.

VII.

Maester Tharne used to zay as how more vlies was cot wi' zugar or honey than wi' vinegar, and that even a body's enemies med be

gammoned wi' vine words. Jim Pinniger zeemed to thenk zo too, when a run agin the jackass one dark night. Jem tuk th' beawst vor th' devil, and cot un by th' ear. "*Zaat 's yer harn, zur,*" * zays Jem.

VIII.

Old Iles was drunk vor dree days together last Lammas, and a laid down by the doower, and wanted zomebody to hauld un. When they axed if a 'd ha' a leetle drap mwore, a'd zeng out, "Noa, noa, I won't ha' a drap."—"Do 'e," zaid they,—"do'e ha' a drap mwore."—"Noa, I won't, not a drap," a grunted. At last another tried un, and then th' owld bwoy cried out, "Noa, I can't get a drap mwore down m';—drow't auver m' veace!"

IX.

Owld Molly Sannell axed Molly Dafter to gie her a drap o' barm one day. "I ha'n't a got narn!" says she; bezides, I do want un mezelf to bake wi'."

* Soft 's your horn, sir.

X.

When Miss ——* vust coomed to Warminster, her went out a visitin' in one o' they there thengs um calls a *zit-dan chayer*. Zo when th' two chaps as car'd her knocked at the doower o' Miss ——'s house, owld Zarah, th' zarvent, aupend un, and cried out, "Noa, noa! gwo away! Missus dwon't encourage non o' them zart o' thengs!" By and by um knocks agen, and then th' old body comed out in a towerin' pashun, hakerin', and zhakin' her vist at um. "'Oman," zays Miss ——, puttin' her yead out o' th' theng, "I dezires you takes up thick ceard to your missis directly." Th' ould body takes the ceard, and upstairs a gwoes. "They won't gwo away, missus," zays she,— "noa, that um won't."—"Who won't?" axed Miss ——. "The men as gied I this here ceard, missus," says Sarah, puttin' th' ceard upon th' table. *"Punch and Judy! I towld um you didn't want to zee non' o' them 'oonderments!"*

* We suppress the name, but the gentle reader may be assured that this anecdote of honest William's is literally true!

XI.

Measter Goddin used to zay as how childern costed a sight o' money to breng um up, but 'twas all very well whilst um was leetle, and zucked th' mother, but when um begun to zuck the vather, 'twas nation akkerd.

XII.

Measter Cuss, and his zun Etherd, went to Lonnun a leetle time zence; and when um got to their journey's ind, Measter Cuss missed a girt passel a carr'd wi' un to th' cwoach. "Lor', vather!" zays Etherd, "I zeed un drap out at 'Vize!" (Devizes.)

XIII.

The vust week our young Measter Jan was at Abin'don school, a complained as the pud-din's was martal zhart o' plums; and one day busted out a laughin' just as um had zed grace. Measter Curtis was in a towerin' pashun, but a zed a'd vorgive un if zo be a'd zay what a was a-laughin' at. "The plums in thuck

puddin', zur," says Measter Jan, "looks as though they was a playin' at hop-step-and-jump!"

XIV.

Squire Puddle was the stingiest old 'oosbird I ever did zee. If a wanted a spreader var 's harness, a'd tell 's men they must get un varn, but um mus'n't cut um out o' any o' *his* hedges. Zo um once went to a naybur's, and got un into trouble var 't, and the justice dreatened to zend un to jail, that a did! They *do* zay a kept a pawn-shop in Lunnun, where a made ael 's money. When a was a bwoy a zed a 's mother used to tell un to get up yarly in th' marnin', 'cos 'twas th' yarly bird as allus cot th' worm. A zeemed to thenk zo when a was living in these parts, var a used to bargain wi' owld Smith, th' 'oont*-catcher, to catch ael th' 'oonts at tuppence a yead. When th' traps was zet a used to get up avore zunrise, gwo to th' trap, take out th' 'oont, and stale the trap! This zaved un th' tuppence a promised to pay

* *i. e.* Want or wont, a mole.

owld Smith, and got un a trap into th' bargain. Zo when a died um vound two or dree scare o' 'oont-traps put by in a cubberd!

XV.

Tom Ockle met th' exziseman one night as a was gwoin' from Ziszeter wi' a basket o' zmuggled baccur. The exziseman wanted to zee what Tom had got in the basket. "There's nothin' but pegs innerds there," zays Tom.—"That may be," zays t' other: "but I must zee anyhow."—"Well—well," zays Tom, "if I puts a haaf-crown in thee mouth, I dare zay thee 'lt not be able to speak."—"No, to be zhure not," zays the exziseman, lettin' gwo th' basket, "and if th' put 's one auver each eye, I zhant zee no mwore nor a 'oont."

XVI.

When I was a young man I had a dog, a precious 'cute un a was, too! A'd catch a hare like a grayhound. I 've cot a scare o' rabbuts wi' hin in one night. By and by zomebody zays to the kippur, thuck William 's got a

dog as plays th' devil wi' ael th' game. Zo th' kippur comes up to m' one day, and zays, zays he, "Maester Little, thuck dog o' yourn 's a bad un; a gwos huntin', I'm towld."—"Lar bless 'e!" zays I; "a wou'dn't harm a mouse, that a wou'dn't."—"Dwon't b'lieve it!" zays he. "Come along wi' I by thuck copse yonder."—Zo as us walked alang, up jumps a hare and away a scampers. "Hollo! hollo!" zays I to the dog, but a slunk behind m' *di*rectly wi 's tail between 's legs.—"Ha!" zays th' kippur, "I b'lieves 'e now, Little. Them as zays your dog hunts be liars, that 's zartin. I 'll be cussed if I dwon't thenk a 's vrightened o' th' game, that I do!" and zo a walked away, and wished m' good marnin'."—"Zo, ho!" thought I; "you be 'nation 'cute, you be, Maester Kippur. If instead o' '*hollo!*' I 'd a cried '*coom hedder!*' a 'd a run a'ter thuck hare like mad!"

XVII.

When ould Jack Smith, th' woont catcher, was a young man, a got zo precious drunk once at Zwindon that a couldn't zee 's way whoam. A

started about eight o'clock, and a'ter walkin' dree or vower hours a vound'self comin' into th' town agen. Zo off a zets to try 't once mwore. By and by 'a tumbles bang into a ditch, where a vell vast asleep. A hadn't been there lang avore th' hos-leeches vound un out, and vasten'd ael auver's vace, and zucked un purty nigh to death. Verry lucky varn, zomebody comed by yarly in th' marnin', and vound un layin' wi' ael the varmunt sticking to un like a litter o' ha'f-starved pegs. They got un out, hows'ever, and tuk'n to the doctor's, and a vine jab they had wi' hin, to be zhure! Jack purtended a didn't care var 't, and zaid a'd vargive th' 'oosbirds what they'd done to 'n, if zo be they'd zar his neamzake, the auverzeer at Zwindon, in th' zame vashion the next time a coomed thuck way.

XVIII.

"There 's a girt deayl o' truth in old zayins, that 's *my* opinion, 'specially that 'un as zays,—

"Lang and lazy;
Black and proud;
Vair and voolish;
Little and loud."

Jan Roberts' family was just like this. Their biggest bwoy was the laziest looby as I ever did zee, and a was as lang and as lane as a rake-stael. Jim, the t' other bwoy, was as black as a gipsy, and a martal proud young wosbird a was. He wouldn't hold plough, not he! a wanted to be one o' th' jav'lin men at the 'zizes; so when a found a cou'dn't be one, a went and listed vor a zowlger. Tom was a regular gawney, wi' a white yead, and went about wi' a handful o' zalt to catch the veldefares (fieldfares), and little Nancy was a naisy and as caddlin' as a wren, that a was.

XIX.

Young Tom Slatter had a puppy as a used to be very vond of. One day he and 's brother Jack was a-teazin' on hin at a vine rate. By and by the leetle varment got savage, and cot howld o' Tom by the cāāf o' 's leg, and held on

tight. "Oh, Jack! Jack!" hollurs Tom, "take un off! take un off! a 's bitin' my leg!" —"Oh, no!" zays Jack, laughin to zee the leetle 'oosbird zo vicious, "*let un zuck a bit, Tom; 't will make un aiger!*" *

XX.

"How far d 'e cal 't to Zirencester, my friend?" zays a Cockney genelman one day to owld Pople, as a wor breakin' stwones on th' road. "Dwont kneow zich a please," zays he, scrattin's yead, "never yeard on 't avore!"— "What!" zays the genelman, "never heard o' Zirencester?"—Noa," zays he, "I aint."— "Why, it 's the next town."—"Haw! haw!" zays Pople; "you means *Ziszeter*; why didn't 'e zay so? it 's about vower mile off."—He was a rum owld customer, thuck owld Pople. One day zomebody axed un how var 't was to Ziszeter. "Ho! dree miles this weather." (It was

* We have heard a similar story of some Yorkshire boys, but on mentioning it to honest William, we were assured that 'twas stolen from him.

nation dirty and slippy.) "Why so?" zaid the man to 'n; "ho, it 's about two miles in vine weather; but when it 's hocksey, like this, we allows a mile vor zlippin' back!"

ARCHÆOLOGICAL WORKS

BY

JOHN YONGE AKERMAN,

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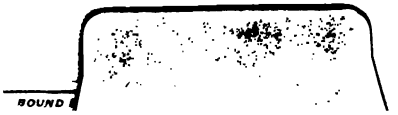
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